

Buffalo Bill Again!

"The Prairie Rover; or, The Robin Hood of the Border," Next Week!

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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A HAPPY DAY.

BY EREN E. REXFORD.

The sky shut down like some blue tent
About our little world that day.
While, like white sails that came and went
Upon some sun-flecked, azure bay,
The white clouds moved when warm winds blew,
So far away all fret and din,
We almost thought that waters blue
Had girt a fairy island in.

The play languor of the air
Was like a dream of southern shores;
We drifted idly here and there,
And quite forgot our untired oars.
We touched the banks where violets grew,
And drank their wine-like sweetness in;
A fairer day I never knew,
I think no fairer one has been.

The water-lilies lifted up
To catch the wine of air and sun,
A dainty and a fragile cup,
And they were brimming, every one.
He broke one from its slender stem,
And bade me drink the draught of youth
From chalice fairer than a gem.
A happy day it was, in truth.

We watched the robins build their nest,
And heard the skylark's silver song,
And floated slowly to the west,
As moved the charmed hours along.
Past shores where willows drooped to dip
The eddying waters, side by side,
And watch the lights and shadows slip
In changeable beauty, down the tide.

We sang together as the sun
Slipped lower down a cloudless west,
Our voices seemed to blend as one,
And so we sang of love and rest.
A simple song, and yet so sweet,
That often, since that summer day,
Its words my lips and heart repeat;
And so the moments slipped away.

And so we drifted with the day
Into the evening of the west,
The world was far and far away,
But love sailed with us, as a guest.
And on, and on, but never back,
Into the sunset's yellow sea,
With moonlight sparkling in our track,
Glad-hearted, silent, drifted we.

Oh, it was such a pleasant dream!
A scene from some enchanted land,
As we went drifting down the stream,
And touched the shores of fairy land.
And since that day my heart has been
As glad as glad can ever be,
For love, who steered our vessel in,
Has promised he would stay with me.

Erminie:

THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AW-
FUL MYSTERY," "A VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. TOOSYPEGGS "TURNS UP" AGAIN.

"His looks de argue him replete with modesty."
—SHAKESPEARE.

"Why, Mr. Harkins, it ain't possible, now!"
exclaimed a struggling, incredulous voice.
"Just to think we should meet again after
such a long time! I'm sure it's real surpris-
ing."

The speaker, a pale young man, with a pro-
fusion of light hair and freckles, and a gaudy
hand carpet-bag, was taking a stroll on the
classic banks of the Serpentine, when sudden-
ly espying a short, plethoric, gruff-looking,
masculine individual coming toward him, he
made a sudden plunge at him, and grasped his
hand with an energy that was quite startling.

The short individual addressed, with a whole-
some distrust of London pickpockets before
his eyes, raised a stout stick he carried, with
the evident intention of trying the thickness
of the pale young man's skull; but before it
could come down, the proprietor of the freckles
began, in a tone of mild expostulation:

"Why, Mr. Harkins, you haven't forgotten
me—have you? Don't you recollect the young
man you brought to London in your wagon
one rainy night? Why, Mr. Harkins, I'm O.
C. Toosypeggs!" said the pale young man, in a
slightly aggrieved tone.

"Why, so hit be!" exclaimed Mr. Harkins,
brightening up, and lowering his formidable
weapon. "Blessed! if you 'adn't gone clean
hout my head! Why, Mr. Toosypeggs, this is
the most surprisingest thing as ever was! I
hain't seen you I don't care when!"

"I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Har-
kins," said Mr. Toosypeggs, gratefully. "I
knew you'd be very glad to see me, and it's
real kind of you to say so. I hope Mrs. Har-
kins and your infant family are all quite well,
I thank you."

"Yes, they're hall among the middlin's,"
said Mr. Harkins, indifferently. "Mrs. Har-
kins 'as been and gone and 'ad the what's
this now?" said Mr. Harkins, pausing, with
knit brows, and scratching his head in per-
plexity.

"Blessed! if I hain't clean forgot the
name, it was 'tongs,' no—yes—it was
'tongs,' hain't something else?"

"And piker," suggested Mr. Toosypeggs,
thoughtfully.

"Mr. Toosypeggs," said Mr. Harkins, facing
round fiercely, "I 'ope you don't mean for to
hinsult a cove, do you?"



"Wife, mother, and widow at eighteen! Maude, Maude, how can I realize this?"

"Why, Mr. Harkins!" remonstrated the as-
tonished and aggrieved Mr. Toosypeggs. "I'm
sure I never meant any such thing; I wouldn't
sult you for all the world, for—" Mr.
Toosypeggs paused for a figure of speech strong
enough. "For any amount of money, Mr.
Harkins," added Mr. Toosypeggs, warmly.

"Well, it don't make no matter if you did,"
said Mr. Harkins, cooling suddenly down.
"But what his this Mrs. 'Arkins 'ad—tongs—
tongs? Oh, yes! tongs-will-eat-us! that's the
name, Mr. Toosypeggs. Mrs. 'Arkins 'ad that,"
said Mr. Harkins, triumphantly.

"Tonsilitis, perhaps," insinuated Mr. Toosy-
peggs, meekly.

"Well, hain't that wot I said?" exclaimed
Mr. Harkins, rousing up again. "Hand my
John Halbert, he's been and 'ad a Sarah Bell
affection!"

"Cerebral," again ventured Mr. Toosypeggs,
humbly.

"Well, hain't that wot I said?" shouted Mr.
Harkins, glaring savagely at the republican,
who wilted suddenly down. "Blessed! if I
hain't a good mind to bring you a clip along
side the 'ead, for your impudence in contradic-
ting me like this 'ere hev'ry time? Why, you'd
perwoke a saint, so you would!" exclaimed the
outraged Mr. Harkins.

"Mr. Harkins, I'm sure I never meant to
offend you, and I'm real sorry for your trou-
ble," apologized Mr. Toosypeggs, in a remorse-
stricken tone.

"Well, it wasn't no trouble," said Mr. Har-
kins, testily. "Cos he got took to the 'ores-
pittle for fear hanny the rest 'of the family
would take it. Mary-Hann, she got her feet
wet, and took the inn-flee-end-ways; wot yer
got to say ag'in' that?" fiercely demanded Mr.
Harkins.

"Mr. Toosypeggs, who had been muttering
"influenza" to himself, and chuckling inward-
ly, as he thought how he could correct Mr.
Harkins, in his own mind, in spite of him, was
so completely overpowered by this bristling
question, that the blood of conscious guilt rushed
to his face, and Mr. O. C. Toosypeggs stood
blushing like a red cabbage.

"Because if you've got hannything to say
ag'in' hit," went on Mr. Harkins, pointing one
stubby forefinger at society in general, "you
had better let hit hout for a little hexercise,
that's all. Come, now!"

"Mr. Harkins, it's very kind of you to give
me permission, and I am very much obliged to
you," said Mr. Toosypeggs, looking severely
at a small boy who had a hold of his coat-tails
behind. "But I hain't the remotest idea of
saying anything, whatever, against it. I'm
sure it's perfectly right and proper Mary Ann
should have the influenza, if she wants to."

"Ah! I didn't know but what you might
think she 'adn't," said Mr. Harkins blandly.
"There wasn't hanny tellin' you know, but
that you might say a Hinzlshman's 'ouse
wasn't his castle, and he couldn't 'ave what-
over he likes there. Well, the baby, he got
the crook, which 'ad the melancholic hefted
hof turning 'im perfectly black in the face."

Mr. Toosypeggs, though inwardly surmising

Mr. Harkins meant the croup, thought it a very
likely effect to be brought about by either.

"Then Sary Jane took the brown skeeters,
hand I 'ad the lum-beggar him my hown back,
but on the whole, we were all pretty well,
thanky!"

"I am real glad to hear it," said Mr. Toosy-
peggs, with friendly warmth. "I've been
pretty well myself since, too. I'm very much
obliged to you."

"Let's see, it's near a month, hain't it, since
the night I took you to London?" said Mr. Har-
kins.

"Three weeks and five days exactly," said
Mr. Toosypeggs, briskly.

"I suppose you don't disremember the hold
gipsy has we took him that night—do you? 'I
was a stranger hand you took me him.' That's
in the Bible, Mr. Toosypeggs," said Mr. Har-
kins, drawing down the corners of his mouth, and
looking pious, and giving Mr. Toosypeggs a dig
in the ribs, to mark the beauty of the quota-
tion.

"Yes, Mr. Harkins, but not so hard, if you
please—it hurts," said Mr. Toosypeggs, with
tears in his eyes, as he rubbed the place.

"What does that there piece hout the Bi-
ble?" said Mr. Harkins, with one of his sudden
bursts of fierceness.

"Oh, Lor', no!" said the deeply-scandalized
Mr. Toosypeggs, surprised into profanity by the
 enormity of the charge. "It's your elbow, Mr.
Harkins, it hurts," said Mr. Toosypeggs, with a
subdued sniffle.

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Harkins; "well hit's
hot no squeencyance, but you don't disremem-
ber the hold gipsy-woman we took him, do
you?"

"The one with the black eyes and short
frock! Oh, I remember her!" said Mr. Toosy-
peggs. "I've never seen her since."

"No, I shouldn't s'pose you 'ad," said Mr.
Harkins, gruffly, "seein' she's as mad as a
March 'are, down there with her tribe. Mys-
terious are the ways of Providence. You
blamed little rascal! hif you do that again, I'll
chuck you inter the Serpentine! blessed hif I
don't."

His last sentence, which began with a pious
upturning of the whites, or rather the yellows,
of Mr. Harkins' eyes, was abruptly cut short
by a depraved youth, who, turning a course of
summersaults for the benefit of his constitu-
tion, rolled suddenly against Mr. Harkins' shins,
and the next instant found himself
whimpering and rubbing a portion of his per-
son, where Mr. Harkins had planted a well-
applied kick.

"The way the principals of perillness is
neglected to be hinstilled hinto the minds of
youths now-a-days, is distressin' to behold!"
said Mr. Harkins, with a grimace of pain;
"but has I was sayin' 'bout the hold gipsy
queen, she's gone crazy, hand—(here Mr.
Harkins lowered his voice to a hoarse whisper)
—"she's went hand got a baby!"

"Do tell!" ejaculated Mr. Toosypeggs, who
saw it was expected of him to be surprised, and
was consequently was, though he could not
see any earthly reason for it.

"A baby," went on Mr. Harkins, who would
have emphasized his words by another dig in
the ribs, but that Mr. Toosypeggs dodged back
in alarm; "a real baby, alive and kickin'!"

"Pshaw! it ain't possible!" said Mr. Toosy-
peggs, in a voice betraying not the slightest
particle of emotion.

"It is—hinnoculous as it may sound, it's
true," said Mr. Harkins, solemnly. "The way
I found hit hout was this: I was comin' halong
'ome, one night hafter bringin' holf a cove
w'at got waylaid to Lunnun, a-singin' to my-
self that there song, the 'Roast Beef 'of Hold
Hingland,' hand a-thinkin' no more 'arm, Mr.
Toosypeggs, nor a lot 'of young pikes goin' to
market," said Mr. Harkins, giving his stick a
grand flourish to mark this bold figure of
speech.

"It wasn't a dark night, Mr. Toosy-
peggs, nor yet a light one; the stars was a-
shinin' like hev'rything, when, hall hof a sud-
den, a 'and was laid hon the reins, hand a
voice, so deep and orful-like hit made me fair-
ly jump, said:

"Will you let me ride hin your vagging
has far has you're going?"

"I looked round, Mr. Toosypeggs," continued
Mr. Harkins, in a husky whisper, "and there
I seed that there gipsy queen, lookin' so dark,
hand fierce, and wild-like, I nearly jumped
clean hout the vagging. Blessed! if I wasn't
sheer! Just then I heerd a cry from a bundle
seed! got in her arms, hand what do you think
I saw, Mr. Toosypeggs?"

The startling energy with which Mr. Har-
kins, carried away by the excitement of his
story, asked this question, so discomposed the
mild young man with the freckles, that he
gave a sudden jump back, and glanced in ter-
ror at the narrator's elbow.

"Really, Mr. Harkins, I don't know, I'm
sure," said Mr. Toosypeggs, grasping his carpet-
bag, nervously.

"A baby!" said Mr. Harkins, in the same
mysterious, husky whisper; "a baby, Mr.
Toosypeggs! Now, the question his, where did
that there baby come from?"

Mr. Harkins gave his hat a slap on the
crown, for emphasis, and resting both hands
on the top of his stick, came to a sudden halt,
and looked Mr. Toosypeggs severely in the face.

"A—really, Mr. Harkins—I—I—I hain't
the remotest idea," said Mr. Toosypeggs, blush-
ing to the very roots of his hair. "I hope you
don't suspect me—"

"Bah!" interrupted Mr. Harkins, with a
look of disgust; "nobody never said nothin'
'bout you! Well, Mr. Toosypeggs, I took her
hin, has she harked, and brought her along has
far has my 'ouse, where Missus 'Arkins gave
her something to eat for the little 'un, which
was has fine a little fellow has you'd wish to
see. Then she went hof, and the next week
we heerd she'd gone and went crazy."

"Poor thing, Why, I'm real sorry, Mr.
Harkins. I dare say she was a real nice old
lady, if she'd been let alone," said Mr. Toosy-
peggs, in a tone of commiseration.

"Why, who tetcher her?" said Mr. Har-
kins, testily.

"Well, they went and transported her son,

and I'm sure it wasn't right at all, when he
did not want to go. She looked real put out
about it that night, herself, too."

"S'pose you heerd her son was drown-
ed?"

"Yes; I saw it in the papers, and I was real
sorry—I really was. Mr. Harkins, I dare say
you was, too?"

Mr. Harkins grunted.

"All hands was lost, wasn't they?" said Mr.
Harkins, after a short pause.

"Yes; all hands and feet," said Mr. Toosy-
peggs, venturing on a weak joke; but, catching
the stern look of Mr. Harkins, at this improper
levity, he instantly grew serious again; "the
ship struck against something—"

"A mermaid," suggested Mr. Harkins.

"Mr. Harkins, I'm very much obliged to
you, but it wasn't a mermaid, it was a coral
reef—that's the name—and went to the bottom
with all hands and the cook."

"Which is a melancholic picture 'of the
treacherousness 'of the hoocean," said Mr. Har-
kins, in a moralizing tone, "hand should be a
severe warning to hall, when they steal, not to
let themselves get taken up, lest they be
taken down a peg or two, hafter."

"But you know, Mr. Harkins, it's been
found out since he wasn't the one who stole the
plate, at all. That man they arrested for
murder, and are going to hang, confessed he
did it. I'm sure you might have seen it in the
papers, Mr. Harkins."

"I don't put no faith hin the papers myself,"
said Mr. Harkins, in a severe tone; "they
hain't to be believed, none of 'em. Hif they
says one thing, you may be sure hit's just hex-
actly the tother. That there's my opinion."

"But, Mr. Harkins, look here," said Mr.
Toosypeggs, deeply impressed with this profound
view of the newspaper press in general, "I
dare say that's true enough, and it's real sensi-
ble of you to say so; but in this case it must
be true. Why, they're going to hang the man,
Mr. Harkins, and he confessed he did that,
along with ever so many other unlawful things.
I wonder if hanging hurts much, Mr. Har-
kins?" said Mr. Toosypeggs, involuntarily loos-
ening his neck-cloth, as he thought of it.

"Well, I don't know," returned Mr. Har-
kins, thoughtfully, "I never was 'anged my-
self, but I had a cousin who married a vidder."
Here, Mr. Harkins, taking advantage of a mo-
ment's unguarded proximity, gave Mr. Toosy-
peggs a facetious dig in the ribs, which caused
that ill-used young gentleman to spring back
with something like a howl.

"You don't know how sharp your elbow is,
Mr. Harkins; and my ribs are real thin. I
ain't used to such treatment, and it hurts,"
said Mr. Toosypeggs, with whom this seemed
to be the climax of wrong, and beyond which
there was no proceeding further.

"I have heerd it was honly their shins as
was tender hin Hamerica," said Mr. Harkins.
"When are you goin' back to Hamerica, Mr.
Toosypeggs?"

"Not before a year—perhaps two," said Mr.
Toosypeggs, brightening suddenly up. "And I
tell you what, Mr. Harkins, America is a real
nice place, and I'll be ever so glad to get back
to it. There was the nicest people round
where we lived that ever was," went on Mr.
Toosypeggs, getting enthusiastic. "There was
Judge Lawless, up at Heath Hill; and old Ad-
miral Haverful, at the White Squal; and lots
of other folks. Where I lived was called Dis-
mal Hollow, owing to its being encircled by
huge black rocks on all sides, and a dark pine
forest on the other."

"Pleasant place it must 'ave been," said
Mr. Harkins, with a strong sneer.

"Well, it wasn't so pleasant as you might
thiak," seriously replied Mr. Toosypeggs, on
whom his companion's sarcasm was completely
thrown away; "the sun never shone there;
and as Dismal Creek, that run right before
the house, got swelled up every time it rained,
the house always made a point of getting flooded,
and so we lived most of the time in the attic
in the spring. There were runaway niggers
in the woods, too, who used to steal and do a
good many other nasty things, so it wasn't
safe to go out at night, but, on the whole, it
was pretty pleasant."

"Wot ever made you leave sich a nice
place?" said Mr. Harkins, with a little sup-
pressed chuckle.

"Why, Mr. Harkins, I may tell you as a
friend, for I know you won't mention it
again," said Mr. Toosypeggs, lowering his voice
to a deeply-confidential and strictly private
cadence. "My pa died when I was a little
shaver about so-year-old, and ma and I were
pretty poor, to be candid about it. Well, then,
three years ago my ma died, too, which was a
serious affliction to me, Mr. Harkins, and I
was left plunged in deepest sorrow and pover-
ty. The niggers worked the farm, and I was
employing my time in cultivating a pair of
whiskers to alleviate my grief when I received
a letter from an uncle here in England, telling
me to come right on, and, if he liked me, he'd
make me his heir when he died, which was
real kind of him. That's what brought me
here, Mr. Harkins; and I'm stopping with my
uncle and his sister, who is an unmarried
woman of forty-five, or so."

"Hand the hold chap's live yet?" inquired Mr. Harkins.

"Mr. Harkins, my uncle, I am happy to say, still exists," answered Mr. Toosyeps, gravely.

"Humph! 'As he got much pewter, Mr. Toosyeps?"

"Much what?" said the mild owner of the freckles, completely at a loss. "You'll excuse me, I hope, Mr. Harkins, but I really don't understand."

"Green," muttered Mr. Harkins, contemptuously to himself. Then aloud: "Ow much do you think he'll leave you?"

"Well, about two thousand pounds or so," said Mr. Toosyeps, complacently.

"Two thousand—pound!" slowly articulated the astounded Mr. Harkins. "Oh, my hey!—w-y, you'll be rich, Mr. Toosyeps! What will you do with all that there money?"

"Why, my aunt, Miss Priscilla Dorothea Toosyeps, and I are going home to Maryland (that's where I used to live, Mr. Harkins), and we're going to fit up the old place and live there. Aunt Priscilla never was in America, and wants to see it real bad."

"Two thousand—pound!" still more slowly repeated Mr. Harkins. "Well, things is' stonishing. Jest think hof me now, the honest and 'ard-working father of ten children, hand you won't catch nobody going hand dying hand leaving me one single blessed brass farden, while here's a cove more'n 'alf a hass. I say, Mr. Toosyeps, you wouldn't lend me a guinea or two, would you?" inquired Mr. Harkins in his most incredulous voice.

"Why, certainly, Mr. Harkins," said Mr. Toosyeps, briskly, drawing out his purse. "I'm real happy to be able to be of service to you. Here's two guineas, and don't put yourself out about paying it."

"Mr. Toosyeps, you're a brick!" said Mr. Harkins, grasping his hand with emotion. "I won't put myself out in the least, since you're kind enough to request it; but hif you'll come and dine with me some day, I'll give you a dinner of biled pertaters and roast honions fit for a king. Will you come?" urged Mr. Harkins, giving him a friendly poke with his forefinger.

"Certainly I will, Mr. Harkins; and it's real kind in you to ask me," said Mr. Toosyeps, politely. "I see you're in a hurry, so I'll bid you good-day, now. Most certainly I'll come, Mr. Harkins. I'm very much obliged to you."

CHAPTER IX.

"I was so young—I loved him so—I had no mother—God forgive me!—and I fell!"
—BROWNING.

AND how fell the news of Reginald Germaine's innocence of the crime for which he was condemned, and his sad end, on the other personages connected with our tale?

To his mother came the news in her far-off greenwood home, and as she heard he had perished forever in the stormy sea, Reason, already tottering in her half-crazed brain, entirely gave way, and she fled, a shrieking maniac, through the dim, old woods.

To Earl De Courcy it came in his stately home, to fill his heart with deepest sorrow and remorse. Hauntingly before him arose the agonized, despairing face of the lonely woman, as on that last night she had groveled at his feet, shrieking for that mercy he had refused. Proud, stern man as he was, no words can express the deep pity, the heartfelt sorrow he felt, as he thought of that lonely, despairing, childless woman, a wanderer over the wide world.

To Lord Ernest Villiers it came, bringing deepest regret for the bold-eyed, high-hearted youth, so unjustly condemned, so wrongly accused. He thought of him as he knew him first—proud, princely, handsome, and generous. And now that young life, under the unjust sentence of the law, had passed away; that haughty head, noble even in its degradation, lay far under the deep sea, among the bleaching bones of those guilt-harassed men.

To one, in her father's castle halls, it came, bringing a feeling of untold relief. He had cruelly wronged her; but he was dead now, and she freely forgave him for all she had suffered. While he lived, incurable sorrow must be hers; but he was gone, and happy days might dawn for her yet. She might love another now, without feeling it a crime to do so—one noble and generous, and worthy of her in every way. One deep breath of relief, one low sigh to the memory of his sad fate, and then a look of calm, deep happiness stole over the beautiful face, such as it had not worn for years, and the beautiful head, with its wealth of raven ringlets, dropped on her arm, in a voiceless thanksgiving, in a joy too intense for words.

And this was Lady Maude Percy. In spite of her steady refusal of his suit, Lord Villiers had not despaired. He could not understand the cause of her strange melancholy and persistent refusal of her hand, knowing, as he did, that she loved him, but, believing the obstacle to be merely an imaginary one, he hoped on, and waited for the time to come when this singular fancy of hers would be gone.

That time had come now. Calling, one morning, and finding her in the drawing-room, he was greeted with a brilliant smile, with a quick flush of pleasure, and a manner so different from her customary one, that his heart bounded with sudden hope.

"I am truly rejoiced to see Lady Maude recovering her spirits again," he said, his fine eyes lit up with pleasure. "She has been shadowed by the dark cloud of her nameless melancholy long enough."

"If Lord Villiers only knew how much cause I had for that 'nameless melancholy,' he would forgive me any pain it may ever have caused him," she said, while a shadow of the past fell darkly over her bright young face.

"And may I not know? Dearest Maude, when is this mystery to end? Am I never to be made happy by the possession of this dear hand?"

He took the little, white hand, small and snowy as a lily-leaf, and it was no longer withdrawn, but nestled lovingly in his, as if there it found its rightful home.

"Maude, Maude!" he cried, in a delirium of joy, "is your dark dream, then, in reality over?" Oh, Maude, speak, and tell me! Am I to be made happy yet?"

"If you can take me as I am, if you can forgive and forget the past, I am yours, Ernest!" she said, in a thrilling whisper.

In a moment she was in his arms, held to the true heart whose every throb was for her—her head upon the breast that was to pillow hers through life.

"Maude, Maude! My bride, my life, my peerless darling! Oh, Maude, this is too much happiness!" he cried, in a sort of transport between the passionate kisses pressed on her warm, yielding lips.

Blushingly she rose from his embrace, and gently extricated herself from his arms.

"Oh, Maude, my beautiful darling! May Heaven forever bless you for this!" he fervently exclaimed, all aglow with passionate love.

She had sunk into a seat, and bent her head into her hand, not daring to meet the full, falcon gaze, flashing with deepest tenderness, that she knew was bent upon her.

"Speak again, Maude! Once more let me hear those precious words from your own sweet lips, Maude! Maude, sweetest and fairest, speak!"

He wreathed his arms around her, while he seemed breathing out his very soul as he aspired her name.

"But you have not heard all, my lord. This secret—do you not wish to hear it?" she faintly said, without lifting her dark, beautiful eyes.

"Not unless it is your wish to tell it. I want to hear nothing but that you are my own."

"Yet, when you hear it, my lord, you may reject the hand I have offered."

"Never, never! Nothing under heaven could make me do that!"

"You speak rashly, Lord Ernest. Wait until you have heard all. I dare not accept the noble heart and hand you offer, without revealing the one great error of my youth."

"You commit error, my beautiful saint! You, who are as perfect in soul as in body. Oh, Maude, I cannot believe it."

"It is true, nevertheless, my lord. But oh, how shall I tell you! How can I confess what I have been—what I am?"

There was a sharp agony in her voice, and her head dropped on her hands, and her fair bosom rose and fell like a tempest-tossed sea.

Encircling her with his arm, he drew her down until her white face lay hidden in his breast, and then pressing his lips to the dark ripples of hair sweeping against his cheek, he murmured, in tenderest whisper:

"Tell me now, Maude, and fear not; for nothing you can say will convince me you are not as pure and unsullied as the angels themselves. What is this terrible secret, sweetest love?"

"Oh, my dear lord, every word you speak, every caress you give me, makes my revelation the harder," she passionately cried. "And yet it must be made, even though you should spurn me from you in loathing after. Listen, my lord. You think me Lady Maude Percy?"

"Yes, dear love."

"That is not my name?"

"What, Maude?"

"That is not my name. No; I am not mad, Lord Villiers, though you look as if you thought so. I have been mad once! You and all the world are deceived. I am not what I seem."

"What, in Heaven's name, do you mean? Wait, then, are you?"

"I was a wife! I have been a mother! I am a widow!"

"Maude!"

"You recoil from me in horror! I know it would be so. I deserve it—I deserve it! but oh, Lord Villiers, it will kill me!" she cried, passionately wringing her hands.

"Maude, are you mad?"

"I am not—oh, I am not! if a grief-crazed, a blighted life, a broken heart be not madness."

"But, Maude! Good heavens! You are so young—not yet eighteen! Oh, it cannot be true!" he cried, incoherently.

"Would to God it were not! Yet four years ago I was a wedded wife!"

"Wife, mother, and widow at eighteen! Maude, Maude, how can I realize this?"

"Oh, I was crazed! I was mad! and I did love him so, then! Not as I love you, Lord Ernest, with a woman's strong, undying affection, but with the wild, passionate fervor of youth. I must have inherited my dead mother's Spanish blood; for no calm-pulsed English girl ever felt love like that."

"Oh, Lady Maude!—Lady Maude! I could hardly have believed a messenger from heaven had he told me this."

"God be merciful to human error! A long life of sorrow and remorse must atone for that first rash fault."

He was pacing up and down the long room with rapid, excited strides; his fine face flushed, and his hands tightly shut, as if to keep down the bitterness that rebelliously rose at this unlooked-for avowal. He had expected to hear some light, trivial fact, magnified by a morbid imagination; but not a clandesine marriage.

No man likes to hear that the woman he loves has ever loved another; and Lady Maude Percy had already seemed so angelic that this sudden "falling off" of his high ideal, brought with it a pang like the bitterness of death.

And therefore, pacing up and down—up and down, with brain and heart in a tumult—Lord Ernest Villiers' pride for one moment overcame and mastered his love. For one brief moment only—for then his eyes fell on the drooping figure and despair-bowed young head; and the anguished attitude went to his heart, bringing back a full tide of pity, love, and forgiveness. All was forgotten, but that she was the only one he ever did or could love, and lifting the sorrowing head and grief-bowed form in his arms, once more he clasped her closer to the manly young heart she could feel throbbing under her own, and whispered:

"My own life's darling still! Oh, Maude! if you must grieve, it shall be on my breast. If you have erred, so, too, have I—so have we all, often. I will forget all but that you have promised my arms shall be your home forever!"

"And you forgive and love me still? Oh, Lord Ernest!"

He kissed away her tears as she wept aloud. "One thing more, dearest. Who was my Maude's first love?"

He felt a convulsive shiver run through the delicate form he held. He felt her breast heave and throb as if the name was struggling to leave it, and could not.

"Tell me, Maude, for I must know."

"Oh, saints in heaven! how can I? Oh, Lord Ernest! this humiliation is more than I can endure."

"Speak, Lady Maude! for I must know."

She lifted her eyes to his, full of unspeakable anguish, and then dropped her head heavily again; for in that fixed, grave, noble face, full of love and pity as it was, there was no yielding now.

"Tell me, Maude, who was the husband of your childhood?"

From the pale, quivering lip, in a dying whisper, dropped the words: "Reginald Germaine, the gipsy!"

There was a moment's deathlike silence. The handsome face of Lord Ernest Villiers seemed turned to marble, and still motionless as if expiring, she lay in the arms that clasped her still in a close embrace. At last:

"Heaven be merciful to the dead! Look up, my precious Maude; for nothing on earth shall ever come between us more!"

Calm and clear, on the troubled wave of her tempest-tossed soul, the low words fell; but only her deep, convulsive sobs were his answer.

"Maude!—my own dear Maude!" he cried, at last, alarmed by her passion of grief, "cease this wild weeping. Forget the troubled past, dear love; for there are many happy days in store for us yet."

But still she wept on—wildly, vehemently, at first—until her strong passion of grief had passed away. He let her sob on in quiet now, with no attempt to check her grief, except by his silent caresses.

She lifted her head and looked up, at last, thanking him by a radiant look, and the soft, thrilling clasp of her white arms.

"I will not ask you to explain now, sweet Maude," he softly whispered. "Some other time, when you are more composed, you shall tell me all."

"No—no; better now—far better now; and then, while life lasts, neither you nor I, Ernest, will ever breathe one word of the dark, sorrowful story again. Oh, Ernest! can all the fondest love of a lifetime suffice to repay you for the forgiveness you have shown me to-day?"

"I am more than repaid now, dear love. Speak of that no more. But now that the worst is over, will Maude tell me all?"

"I have not much to tell, Ernest; but you shall hear it. Nearly three years before you and I met, when a child of fourteen, I was on a visit to my uncle Everly's. My cousin Hubert, home from college, brought with him a fellow-student to spend the vacation, who was presented to me as Count Germaine. What Reginald Germaine was then, you, who have seen him, do not need to know. Handsome, dashing, fascinating, he took every heart by storm, winning love by his gay, careless generosity, and respect by his talents and well-known daring. I was a dreamy, romantic school girl; and in this bold, reckless boy, handsome as an angel, I saw the living embodiment of my most glorious ideal. From morning till night we were together; and, Ernest, can you understand that wild dream? How I loved him then, words are weak to express, how I loathed and despised him after no word had ever been said."

"I never tell. Ernest, he persuaded me to elope with him one night; and we were married. I never stopped to think of the consequences then. I only knew I would have given up my hopes of heaven for him! Three weeks longer he remained at Everly Hall; and then papa sent me back to school, and he went to London."

"No one was in our secret, and we met frequently, unsuspected; though papa, thinking he was too presuming, had forbidden me to associate with him. One day we went out driving; the carriage was upset; I fainted; and for a long time I remembered nothing more."

"When reason returned, I was in a little cottage, nursed by an old woman; while he hovered by my bedside night and day. Then I learned that I had given birth to a child—dead now and buried. I could recollect myself as people recollect things in a confused dream—of hearing for a time the feeble cries of an infant, and seeing a baby face, with the large, black, beautiful eyes of Reginald Germaine. I turned my face to the wall and wept, at first, in childish grief; but he caressed and soothed me, and I soon grew calm."

"At the time, a strange, unaccountable change had come over him; though I could not tell what. When I was well again I learned. Standing before me, one morning, he calmly and quietly told me how he had deceived me—that, instead of being a French count, he was the son of a strolling gipsy; but that, having repented of what he had done, he was willing to give me up."

"The very life seemed stricken out of my heart as I listened. Then my pride—the aroused pride of my race—arose; and, oh! words are weak to tell how I loathed myself and him. That I Percy—the daughter of a noble race that had mated with royalty hitherto—had fallen so low as to wed a gipsy! I shrank, in horror unspeakable, from the black, bottomless quagmire into which I had sunk. All my love in that instant turned to bitterest scorn, and I passionately bade him leave me, and never dare to come near me again, or breathe a word of the past. He obeyed; and from that day I never beheld him more."

"After that, I met you, Lord Ernest, and I loved you as I never loved him. For him, I cherished a blind, mad passion; for you, I felt the strong, earnest love of womanhood. You loved me; but I shrank from the affection my very soul was crying out for, knowing I dared not love you without guilt. Now you know the secret of my coldness and mysterious melancholy."

"I heard often of Germaine; and his name was like a spear-thrust to my heart. When I was told of his arrest, trial and condemnation for grand larceny, you perhaps may imagine, but I can never tell, exactly what I felt. His name was the theme of every tongue; and after day I was forced to listen to the agonizing details, knowing—low as he had fallen, guilty as he might be—he was my husband still. Thank God! through all his ignominy, he had honor enough never to reveal our dark secret. Then came the news of his death; and Heaven forgive me if my heart bounded as I heard it!"

"Oh, Lord Ernest! you were my first thought. I felt I could dare to love you now as you deserved to be loved, without sinning. I determined to tell you all, and to love you still, even though you spurned me from you forever. Oh, Ernest! my noble-hearted! may God forever bless you for forgiving me as you have done, and loving me still!"

Her voice ceased, but the dark, eloquent eyes were full of wild love—of love that could never die for all time.

"My own!—my own! never so well beloved as now! My Maude!—my bride!—my wife! blot out from the leaves of your life that dark page—that year of passion, of error, of sorrow and shame. We will never speak or think of it more, sweet Maude. Germaine has gone to answer for what he has done; if he has sinned while living, so also he has deeply suffered and sorrow-atoned for all. Fiery, passionate and impulsive, if he has wronged others, so also has he been deeply wronged. May God forgive him!"

"Amen," was the solemn response.

"And now, Maude, what need of further delay? When shall this dear hand be mine?"

"Whenever you claim it, dear Ernest. I shall have no will but yours now," she answered, with all a woman's devotion in her deep eyes. "I am yours—yours through life, and beyond death, if I may."

CHAPTER X.

THE VOICE OF COMING DOOM.

"They spoke not a word, But like dumb statues or breathless pale, Stared on each other and looked deadly pale."
—SHAKESPEARE.

"Oh! positively, your ladyship is looking perfectly dazzling! I never, no, never saw anybody half so beautiful in my life! Oh,

Lady Kate! isn't she charming?" And little Miss Clara Jernyngham, in an outburst of enthusiasm, earnestly clasped her little white hands, flashing with jewels, together, and went off into a look of ecstasy wonderful to behold.

Lady Kate McGregor, the proud, dark-eyed daughter of an impoverished Scottish nobleman, smiled quietly as she replied:

"Lady Maude is always lovely, and like all brides, looks doubly so now. How many of the gentlemen will envy Lord Villiers to-night?"

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Miss Clara, earnestly. "I am quite sure if I was a man (which, thank the gods! I am not), I would be tempted to shoot him, or do something else equally dreadful, for carrying off the reigning belle! I really don't see how any man in his proper senses could help falling in love with Maude. And yet there's brother George, now, he takes it as coolly as—as—I don't know what."

The usual fate of Miss Clara's smiles. Had Miss Jernyngham's eyes not been so earnestly fixed on a certain superb set of diamonds that lay on a dressing-table near, she might have seen a sudden flush in the dark, handsome face of Lady Kate as she spoke, and that the lace on her bosom fluttered perceptibly, as if with the beating of the heart beneath.

"So Captain Jernyngham does not care?" said Lady Kate, in a voice not quite steady.

"No," answered Miss Clara, her eyes dancing from the blinding river of diamond-light on the table to a magnificent bridal veil lying near—"no; which is a proof of his insensibility. The fact is, George never was in love in his life, and never will be, as far as I can see. He will, most likely, die an old bachelor, if some rich heiress does not take pity on him, marry him, and pay his debts, before long. Did you see the Duke of B— this evening, though, Lady Kate? What a dear old creature it is! Going about shaking so, like a lot of *blanc mange*. I'm going to marry him some day, for the family diamonds. Worth while, eh?"

Miss Jernyngham is herself the best judge of that," coldly replied Lady Kate, her handsome face growing proud and pale, as she listened to Miss Clara's speech about her brother.

"Really, Lady Maude, it's my duty to tell you you are looking perfectly bewildering to-night, as all brides should look. If Lord Villiers had never been in love with you before, he must certainly have fallen into that melancholy predicament this evening," said little Miss Clara, dancing off on a new tack. "This orange wreath and bridal veil are vastly becoming. I am sure no one would think you had been ill this morning, to look at you now."

It was a pleasant scene on which the light of the rose-shaded chandelier fell. The superbly furnished dressing-room of Lady Maude Percy was all ablaze with numberless little jets of flame, which the immense mirrors magnified fourfold. Priceless jewels lay carelessly strewn about on the inlaid dressing-table, mingling with rare bouquets, laces, gloves, and tiny satin slippers, that would scarcely have fitted Cinderella herself. Lady Kate McGregor, proud and stately, in white satin, and point lace, and pale, delicate pearls, stood leaning against the marble mantel, her handsome eyes growing cold and scornful whenever they rested on Miss Clara Jernyngham. That frivolous little lady, quite bewildering in the same snowy robes, was all unconscious of those icy glances, as she fluttered, like a butterfly over a rose, around another lady standing before a full-length mirror, while her maid arranged the mist-like bridal veil on her head, and set the orange wreath on her dark, shining curls.

It was Lady Maude Percy; and this was her bridal eve. Fearlessly, lovely she looked as she stood there, with the light of a happy heart flashing her rounded cheeks, swelling her white bosom, and flashing from her dark, Syrian eyes. The bridal dress she wore was worth a duke's ransom. It fell around her like a summer cloud, three glistening folds of richest lace, so light, so gauzy, so brilliant, that it looked like a flashing mist. Diamonds that blinded the eyes with their insufferable light rose and fell on her white bosom with every tumultuous throb of the heart beneath. Like a floating cloud fell over all the bridal veil, and glittering above it rose the orange wreath of rarest jewels. There was a streaming light in her magnificent eyes, a living, glowing flush on her cheek, all unusual there, and little Miss Clara stood up and clasped her hands as she gazed in speechless admiration.

It was one month after the interview recorded in the last chapter. Lord Villiers, with a lover's impatience, would consent to wait no longer; and as Lady Maude had not opposed him, this day had been fixed. The marriage was to have taken place at St. George's, in the morning; but early that eventful day the bride had been seized with so severe a headache that she was unable to leave her room. Therefore, the ceremony had been necessarily delayed until the evening, when the august bishop of C— himself was to come and perform the nuptial rite at the Percy mansion. Some were inclined to look upon this interruption in the light of an evil omen; but Lady Maude only smiled, and inwardly thought that, as his bride, nothing on earth could ever darken her life more. How little did she dream of the dream of the dark, scathing, unrelenting revenge that hovered around her like a vulture waiting for its prey!

The old earl, her father, who was somewhat old-fashioned in his notions, and liked ancient customs kept up, had determined his daughter's bridal should be celebrated by the grandest of the season.

"I don't like this new-fangled way young people nowadays have, of getting married in the morning, coming home for a hasty breakfast, and then tearing off, post-haste, for France, or Germany, or somewhere, as if they wanted change of scene to reconcile them to what they have done," said the old gentleman, in strict confidence, to Lord De Courcy. "It wasn't so in my time. Then we had all our friends assembled, and enjoyed ourselves together over a bottle or two of old wine until morning. Ah! those were the days!" And the old earl heaved a deep sigh, and looked ruefully at his gouty foot.

Resolving, therefore, to keep up those halcyon days at all hazards, the great saloons of the stately hall were thrown open, and now they were filled with the *élite* of the city, all waiting impatiently for the coming of the bride.

Lord Hugh De Courcy, suave, stately, courteous, and bland, was there, conversing with the father of the bride, and two or three of the most distinguished politicians of the day—his eyes now and then wandering from the faces of his friends, to rest proudly on the handsome form of his son, who, in the absence

of Lady Maude, was the cynosure of all eyes, the "observed of all observers."

The venerable and high-salaried bishop, attended by several other "journeymen soul-savers," as Captain George Jernyngham irreverently called them, was there, too, in full pontificals, all ready, and waiting to tie the Gordian knot.

The rooms were filled with the low hum of conversation. There were waving of fans, and flirting of bouquets, and dropping of handkerchiefs, and rustling silks and satins, and flashing of jewels, and turning of many bright, impatient eyes toward the door where the bride and her attendants were presently expected to make their appearance. Ladies coquetted, and flirted, and turned masculine heads with brilliant smiles and entrancing glances, and gentlemen bowed and complimented, and talked all sorts of nonsense, just like gentlemen in general, and all things went "merry as a marriage-bell."

Standing by themselves, as when we first saw them, were Lord Ernest Villiers and his friend, Captain Jernyngham, of the Guards.

Handsome, stately, and noble, Lord Villiers always looked; but more so now than ever. What man does not look well when happy, faultless in costume, and about to be married to the woman he loves?

Captain Jernyngham, first groomsmen, etc., was also looking remarkably well—a fact of which the young gentlemen himself was well aware; and lounging in his usual careless attitude against a marble column, he languidly admired his aristocratically small foot in its shining boot.

"There are some men born to good luck, just as others are born to be hanged"—he was saying, with the air of a man delivering an oration—"born with a silver spoon in their mouths, to use a common, but rather incredible figure of speech. You, *mi lord* Villiers, are one of them; you were born above the power of Fortune—consequently, the toadying jade shows you a face all smiles, and gives the cold shoulder to poor devils like me, who really stand in need of her good graces. This world's a humbug! Virtuous poverty, illustrated in the person of Captain George Jernyngham, is snubbed and sent to Coventry, while potent, rich, and depraved youths like you are borne along on beds of roses. Yes, I repeat it, the world's a humbug! Society's a nuisance! Friendship's a word of two syllables found in dictionaries, nowhere else; and cigars, kid gloves and pale ale are the only things worth living for. There's an 'opinion as is an opinion.'"

"Oh, come now, Jernyngham! things are by no means so desperate as you would have me believe," said Lord Villiers, laughing. "Young, good-looking, and admired by the ladies, what more would you have?"

"Well, there is a vulgar prejudice existing in favor of bread and butter, and neither of the three items mentioned will exactly supply me with that useful article. I intend trying the matrimonial dodge, some day, if I can pick up anything under fifty, with three or four thousand a year, who wants a nice youth to spend it for her?"

"Love, of course, being out of the question."

"Love!" said the guardsman, contemptuously. "I lost all faith in that article since I was fourteen years old, when I fell in love with our cook, a young lady of six-and-thirty. My father forbade the bans; she ran off with a humpbacked chimney-sweep, and I awoke to the unpleasant consciousness that 'Love's young dream' was all bosh."

"And you have been heart-whole ever since?"

"Well, I rather think so. I have felt a peculiar sensation under my vest-pocket now and then, when Kate McGregor's black eyes met mine. But psaw! where's the use of talking! She's as poor as a church-mouse, and so am I, unless we should set up a chandler-shop; there would be a paragraph in the *Times* headed: 'Melancholy death by starvation. The bodies of an unfortunate couple were found yesterday in the attic of a rickety, six-story house, and the coroner's inquest returned a verdict of "Death for want of something to eat." The unfortunate man was dressed in a pair of spurs and a military shako—having pawned the rest of his clothing, and held in his hand the jagular bone of a red herring half-devoured.' Not any, thank you!"

Captain George stroked his mustache complacently, while Lord Villiers laughed.

"A pleasant picture that! Well, I shouldn't wonder if it's what 'love in a cottage' often comes to."

A servant approached at this moment, and whispered something to Lord Villiers.

"The ladies are waiting, Jernyngham," he said, hastily. "Call Howard, and come along."

He hastened out to the lofty hall, and at the foot of the grand staircase he was joined by Jernyngham and Howard, the second groomsmen, Lord De Courcy, Earl Percy and a few other intimate family friends.

The bride and her attendants had already left her "maidenhood," and Lady Maude was met at the foot of the stairs by Lord Villiers, who drew her arm within his, and whispered, in a thrilling voice:

"My bride! my wife! my queen! my beautiful Maude! never so beautiful as now

self, (more's the pity!) but will leave it to the imagination of my readers.

The last "I will" had been uttered; and amid that breathless silence Ernest Seyton, Viscount Villiers, and Maude Percy were pronounced man and wife.

There was an instant's pause, and the guests were about to press forward to offer their congratulations, when pealing through the silence came an unseen voice, in clear, bell-like tones that thrilled through every heart, with the words:

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life! My curse, and the curse of Heaven rest on all of the house of De Courcy!"

Blanchard with wonder, horror and consternation, every face was turned in the direction whence the voice came; but nothing was to be seen. So sudden, so unlooked for was this awful interruption; so terrific was that deep, hollow voice, that the shrieks they would have uttered were frozen to the lips of the terrified women. And while they stood speechless, horror-struck, gazing in silence, the deep, fearful voice pealed again through the silent apartment like the knell of doom.

"As the rich man who stole the one ewe-lamb was accursed, so also be all who bear the name of De Courcy! May their bridal-robes turn to funeral-palls! may their hours of rejoicing end in blackest misery! Blighted be their lives! doomed be all they love—hated by earth, and accursed by Heaven!"

The voice ceased. A wild shriek resounded through the room and the bride fell fainting on the ground.

In an instant all was confusion. Ladies shrieked and screamed; servants came rushing in; gentlemen, pale and horror-struck, hurried hither and thither in wildest confusion. All was uproar and dismay. Lord Villiers, with his senseless bride in his arms, was struggling to force his way from the room; and then high above the din resounded the clear, commanding voice of Earl De Courcy:

"Let all be quiet! There is no danger! Secure the doors, and look for the intruder. This is the trick of some evil-minded person to create a sensation."

His words broke the spell of superstitious terror that bound them. Every one flew to obey—guests, servants and all. Each room was searched—every corner and crevice was examined. If a pin had been lost, it must have been found; but they searched in vain. The owner of the mysterious voice could not be discovered.

Looking in each other's faces, white with wonder, they gave up the fruitless search, and returned to the saloon.

Like a flock of frightened birds, the ladies, pale with mortal apprehension, were huddled together—not daring even to speak. In brief, awe-struck whispers the result was told; and then, chill with apprehension, the guests began rapidly to disperse. And in less than an hour the stately house of Maude Percy was wrapt in silence, solitude and gloom. The bride, surrounded by her attendants, lay still unconscious, while all over London the news was spreading of the appalling termination of the wedding.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

Idaho Tom,

THE YOUNG OUTLAW OF SILVERLAND!

BY OLL COOMES.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DEATH CANOE.

NIGHT hung like a shadow over the land. Hill, valley, mountain and forest had all been blended in one dissolving view. The moon sailed askew, attended by her starry retainers. Her full, soft face was reflected in the still waters of Tahoe. The belt of yellow sand that girded the shores of Silver Bay looked like a golden border, and contrasted beautifully with the silvery bay and the dark-green forest of muttering pines.

On the south side of the bay, in among the rocks that were overshadowed by mighty trees, a dull light was reflected from the lower foliage of the trees. Evidently a camp-fire burned beneath the spreading branches of those forest monarchs and published abroad its location.

A pair of restless, searching eyes detected it, and with the silence of a shadow moved away in that direction.

The light, true enough, was the reflection of a camp-fire within whose radius sat and reclined our friends, the Boy Hunters. It was the first night following Billy Brady's adventure with the Indian, Tall Pine.

Wild Dick, Billy and Perry were under a shelving rock where no enemy's bullet could reach them, unless the enemy first made himself master of the position already occupied by their faithful guard, Bold Heart.

Billy's tongue was rattling away as usual, though the absence of Frank Casleton seemed to banish all hilarity from the breasts of his auditors.

Frank, his fate, and the inhabitants of the floating island, were the sole topics of conversation.

Guarded by the vigilant Indian youth, the trio under the ledge felt perfectly at ease, and so the minutes slipped rapidly by, almost unnoticed.

Suddenly a far-off groan came to their ears through the lonesome night.

Bold Heart came bounding down from his look-out into camp in no little excitement.

"What's up, Bold Heart?" asked Dick.

"Somebody in trouble on the bay—mebbe Frank," replied the Indian.

In an instant every boy was upon foot, rifle in hand, ready to march.

Bold Heart led the way, and, pressing along through the dense pine woods, they all descended to the shores of the bay.

Pausing just within the shadows at the edge of the sandy beach, they listened—they heard a sound like that which one in distress would make. It emanated from further around the bay, toward the north.

Keeping within the shadows, the boys skirted along the western shore of the bay, and soon came in sight of a skiff, with a single occupant, standing motionless upon the shimmering waters.

The occupant of the little craft was a savage. This the boys could easily see in the bright glow of the moon. He had hold of both oars, and seemed struggling in all the agonies of death, either to use the oars or release them, it being impossible to tell which.

"There! there, boys!" exclaimed Wild Dick, "there's the canoe of which I was told! You fellows, I tell you there's something awful about it! It's death aimed to touch it. Some invisible power is there. I seen a savage drop dead in it one day. It's always around this bay—always."

"It's a mystery to me," confessed Perry. "See how the savage writhes! He must be suffering the agonies of death itself."

"Death Canoe!" whispered Bold Heart, in superstitious terror.

"The fools that attempt to steal that gay, deceptive little craft are seized with spasms the moment they touch the oars," averred Dick. "This I have observed on more than one occasion. It's a devilish contrivance of them islanders—an infernal machine to—But look!"

A second savage glided from the shadows, ran across the open beach, and plunging into the bay, swam to his friend's assistance. Arriving at the side of the canoe, he reached up, and seizing his friend by the arm, dragged him from the boat after a mighty effort had almost failed.

After dragging him ashore, it was several moments before the warrior could stand, so terrible had been his tortures in the mysterious canoe. As soon as he was able to walk, his friend led him away into the woods, unmolested by the astonished Boy Hunters.

The crack of a rifle rang suddenly across the bay. It seemed to emanate from the opposite side of the floating island which lay dark and silent upon the bosom of the water.

"Well, Satan is to pay to-night, surely," declared Dick, in an undertone.

"And his Satanic majesty has sent a pack of rhad-skins out to collect the money," was Billy's decision.

"Jews and Gentiles!" burst suddenly from Dick's lips, as he saw a broad sheet of flame leap like lightning from the mysterious island.

It was followed by a sharp, thunderous boom, which seemed the signal for a thousand deafening echoes to lend their vibrant powers in an attempt to shake the old mountain to its foundation.

For fully five minutes the echoes roared and surged amid the hills, crashed through the forest, and soared upward to the sky like the thunder of chariot-wheels, only to be hurled back to earth again by the mighty voice of Jove.

"Judas!" exclaimed Billy, "and if that wasn't a canon, I never heard one in me life."

"It was a cannon, without a doubt—a small howitzer," protested Perry, seriously; "and now it is doubtful, even if we had a canoe, whether we would dare approach that floating island or not, to inquire after Frank."

"Perhaps we can signal some of the folks on the island ashore to-morrow, and ascertain Frank's situation; so we might just as well mosey back to camp, for all the good standing here will do."

And so they turned and started back to camp, filled with no little wonder and curiosity by what they had seen and heard.

As they approached camp, Bold Heart suddenly came to a halt, and signified for his companions to do likewise. He had seen the light of the camp-fire flare suddenly up, stronger and brighter, and naturally came to the conclusion that some unknown party had taken possession of, and was replenishing, the fire of their bivouac.

Bold Heart crept forward to reconnoiter. He soon returned, and commanding the boys to follow him, advanced cautiously toward the camp. They soon gained a point where they could command a view of the fire, and to their surprise discovered the figure of a white man, dressed in the garb of a borderman, reclining within its ruddy glow.

Wild Dick scanned the figure as closely as circumstances would permit. There was something about the man's rough, bearded face, and in fact his very attitude of repose, that instinctively told the Boy Hunter the stranger was not to be feared; and so he straightway led the advance into camp.

The old borderman rose to his feet as they approached, peered quickly around him into the darkness, and uttered a low, prolonged whistle significant of surprise, when his eyes fell upon the forms of our young friends advancing from out the shadows.

"Why, boys!" burst from the man's lips, in affected astonishment, "where in the plagued old scratch did you come from?"

"See here now, governor," replied Billy, pushing his cap back from his brow, and shaking his finger at the stranger in a menacing manner, "this is purty thin for a man of yer standing."

"Why, hah, I stand only six feet in my moccasins," replied the old hunter; "but wharfore do you consider that purty thin?"

"Yer jumpin' our claim. This, begob's our camp-fire," retorted Billy.

"Wal now, boy, who said it wasn't? I've no 'jections to your claim. I'm ole Zedekiah Dee, the Mad Trapper, and I'm at home any place, or else I'm not at home, just as suits the case. Step right in, boys, and settle yourselves down to business."

Delighted at the honest, hearty manner of the renowned trapper's speech, all the boys advanced and shook hands with him except Bold Heart, who, seeing the camp was not guarded, at once resumed his watch on the eminence overlooking the camp.

The Mad Trapper resumed his position of ease by the fire, and the Boy Hunters sat down around him.

"What caused you young gentles to obsequitate from your camp?" the trapper asked.

"We went to inquire into a noise we heard along the bay," replied Perry Bassett.

"And did you git your boyish curiosity satisfied?"

"Yes, as to the noise we heard; but we finally got worked up all the more, and left the bay completely puzzled."

"You don't proclaim! Thought all was quiet as a Quaker meetin'," returned Zedekiah Dee, with a bland smile and affected surprise.

"Howdy Moses, and it's a dumbbed old date adder yees must be if yees didn't hear loudly that cannon boom start a million claps of thunder."

"Well, yes, come to think," said Dee, scratching his head, reflectively, "I did hear that little noise, but s'posed it was just an avalanche a hundred miles or so up the mountain. But be you fellers hunters?"

"We are," replied Dick, "but met with a serious loss to-day—a loss that seldom befalls hunters."

"Do tell!" exclaimed the trapper, agast.

"Yes; we lost one of our companions, but—"

"Holy Je-rusalem! too bad! too bad!" sighed the trapper. "Whar did it happen?"

"When—how!—all about it?"

Perry narrated the story of Dick and Frank's adventure on the lake, and the accident that subsequently befell the latter, concluding with the remarks:

"I am afraid he will get into bad hands on that island. There are some queer, mysterious things going on around this bay. The place is full of traps and infernal machines. But, whether the girl that rescued Frank and took him to the island, will have the power and will to continue her act of mercy, is more than I can say."

"She—that's the gal—is a cherribim, boys—a cherribim if ever one descended from on high," said the old trapper, starting to a sitting posture.

"I've see'd her, time and ag'in. She's the essence of all that's sweet, lovely, pure, gentle, kind, noble and angelic in female woman. Yes, boys, she is a cherribim on earth. That's not a spark of manhood in one of you, if you wouldn't lay right down and die fer that girl. Je-rusalem! if I wa'n't so old and infernal ugly, and knowed what to say, and how to say it, I'd make love to her quicker'n you could say hoss-fly. I'm solid on that, boys."

"I am glad to hear that she is such a person," declared Perry; "for if Frank is still on the island alive, she will not let him suffer, for he is a noble-hearted youth himself."

"Boys, it's doubtful if you ever see your friend ag'in," said the trapper, in a solemn tone, glancing at each face to see the effect of his words.

"Is our friend dead?—do you know anything about him?" demanded Perry, excitedly.

"No; but I guess he's not hurt bad; but then he'll fall in love with that little cherribim on the island, and will just up and die for her," replied the trapper, giving utterance to a good-natured chuckle, to see the change that came over the boys' faces.

"You are inclined to get romantic over that girl," Dick suggested.

"Crazy, ar'n't yees, governor?" added Billy.

"Crazy!—yes, more'n crazy—teetotally discombarated, and all for the want of a bit of sport. I'm an ole fool about fun and Ing'in-fightin'."

"I reckon yees care more 'bout the fun than the fightin', eh?" returned Billy.

"Wal, now, frishman, you're beginnin' to doubt my fightin' abilities; but if you want any Ing'in-bustin' done, bring on yer timber, and I'll show you I'm a small earthquake—a regular torpedo of destruction."

"All right, Mither Torpedo; just as soon as we find out about our friend, wees are going up to capter old Molock, and by my sowl, I'd loike to see yees explode in his den."

"You'll have to find old Molock's den afore you capter him."

"Begorra, and we know whar it is."

"Now, boy, you're foolishness with me."

"Pon honor—hope to die if it ar'n't so."

"He speaks the truth, friend trapper," said Dick.

"Je-rusalem! Then that's goin' to make times brisk as the tail of a wounded deer. That fiend incarnate has lived long enough to entitle him to a front seat in purgatory, and I say pass him down. He has the control of all the Ingins that comes hereaways to hunt and fish; and so he has no trouble in gittin' help to do any meanness that he takes a notion to; and—A! what war that?" and the trapper started to his feet.

"Bold Heart's signal of danger!" cried Wild Dick. "Boys, we've got to get out of this, and that in a hurry. Bold Heart never gives a false alarm."

In a moment all were upon their feet.

They were at once joined by the Indian, whose actions betrayed excitement.

"Many Ingins 'bout," he said.

"Boys, the cabin of the Mad Trapper is open to friends. If you'll come along with me, two hours' walk will land us there. What say you to that, youngster?"

"Lead the way, old torpedo, and we'll follow ye," was Billy's reply.

The trapper struck out into the darkness, followed by the Boy Hunters. The youths were almost compelled to run to keep up with their guide, whose long legs sawed the air with wonderful rapidity.

A little over an hour's walk brought them to the old borderman's cabin that stood wrapt in gloom and silence.

The trapper pulled the latch-string, the door swung open and all passed into the room.

"Dark as a wolf's mouth in here, boys," said the trapper, aloud, but at the same instant a shudder passed over his form.

A pungent odor, like that of burning leather, filled the room; and this led the trapper into a startling discovery—the discovery that a fire was burning in the deep fireplace, while every ray of light was excluded from the room by buffalo robes hung up before the mouth of the fireplace.

The quick, perceptive mind of the trapper at once grasped the meaning of the whole, and, in a whisper, said to Billy who was nearest to him:

"Lad, that's a fight—a bloody, gory fight on hand! God only knows how many Ingins are in this room. That's a fire burning in the chimney, but the devils have hung up a curtain which they'll soon jerk aside and flood the room with light, and then—oh! what a bloody fight! Tell yer companions, and tell 'em to git their shooters ready, and when yer all primed give the word, and when I'll let on the light, if the varlets don't do it before, and, having thus warned one of his friends, he continued, aloud, while the youth was conveying the startling facts to his three companions: "But just make yourselves easy, boys, and wait a minute, and I'll knock up a light in the twinkling of a sheep's tail."

He began fumbling around the shelves in the corner to the right of the fireplace, as if searching for a candle or something to strike a fire.

Suddenly Billy exclaimed:

"Rheady, governor!"

The trapper reached forward and seizing the curtain that the unknown intruders had so cunningly arranged over the fireplace tore it aside.

A flood of light burst through the room, and, at the same instant almost, the stunning crash of firearms rung out within the cabin and blended with terrible groans and the sullen fall of heavy bodies upon the floor!

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RESULT OF THE CONFLICT.

For a moment a scene of the wildest horror prevailed within the cabin of the Mad Trapper. The light which lit up the room so suddenly revealed the presence of five savages standing at the back of the cabin with drawn tomahawks. But, the way the trap had been sprung, the Indians were really the surprised party. Before they could raise a weapon, the revolvers of the Boy Hunters rang out, and three of the five red-skins fell dead.

The other two saw how hopeless their chances would be in a conflict, and with a yell of dismay sprung through the open doorway and escaped into the night. The old trapper uttered a yell of vengeance and sprung out in pursuit of them, but the warriors had the advantage of the shadows of night and escaped.

"They've 'scaped, boys," the Mad Trapper said, in a tone of regret, as he came back into the cabin.

"But, boys, you are all dead car-casses. That war as skintically done up as I ever see'd anything done. Regular torpedo, every one of you. But you see now, don't you, that the red varmints s'posed I'd come back here alone, never thinking of sich devilry, and lumber right up to the fireplace, and fluding the robe there throw it aside and thereby light the room, when they'd be ready

and come down on me like a duck on a June-bug. But, they'll not try to exterminate me soon again. They undertook to raise me t'other night, but they were compelled to poll out for that timmer. Thar war a boy with me that night, and, oh! holy Je-rusalem! he war a double-strung catamount on the fight."

"Who was he?" asked Perry Bassett.

"You've heard of him, I know you have. His name is Idaho Tom, the—"

"The Outlaw!" exclaimed Dick.

"Yes, the Outlaw of Silverland, as he's called," replied Zedekiah Dee; "but you needn't open them big eyes of yours with holy horror, for Idaho Tom's as human as any other chap livin'."

"But he's an outlaw—a robber."

"And a boy," added Dee, "not a whit over eighteen, and he's one of the bravest, dashin'-est, handsomest, wiryest young vagabonds that ever pulled a trigger. I tell ye he's a young panther—a tiger, a double-charged thunder-bolt. He's no more robber than I be; it's only a nickname they've given him on about the same principle that they call me the Mad Trapper, or you Wild Dick. I'm not mad; you're not wild; neither is Tom Taylor an outlaw."

"I have always heard that Idaho Tom was a robber, road-agent and cutthroat."

"My boy isn't. He's just sich a feller as'll win your confidence and respect the first time you meet."

"Where is he now?" asked one of the boys.

"Somewhar 'bout the bay."

"Then we may meet him soon."

"You may, yes, to be sure; but, boys, I must clear the cabin of them carcasses. They make me fairly boil over—explode."

The dead were at once removed from the cabin; then the door was closed and locked, and the little party sat down to discuss the events of the day and night.

The boys found the old trapper, himself, a boy in spirit, full of rollicking humor and jollity. In his companionship the hours slipped by unnoticed, and the first thing they were aware of the rosy dawn of morning was upon them.

Zedekiah prepared breakfast for the whole party, and after it had been dispatched, the boys took leave of the trapper and set out for the bay to look out for some clue to Frank Casleton's fate.

They found that mysterious death canoe in the place it occupied the previous night. But the floating island seemed deserted by all save a few birds that twittered among the shrubbery.

The boys moved on around the bay. The sun rose higher and higher. The chill breath of night grew warm in the mellow sunshine. Softly the breeze crept in among the great pines. The birds sang gaily above, and the waves rippled gently along the sandy beach.

The sudden crack of a rifle broke the sweet harmony of all. The young hunters came to a halt and glanced cautiously around. A little cloud of smoke hanging on the air above a clump of bushes, told that the one who fired the shot was concealed there, assassin-like.

A moment later a savage crept from the thicket and stole like a panther through the woods; and, still another moment later, another person became visible, following directly upon the trail of the savage. This was a white person—a boy. It was Idaho Tom, the Outlaw of Silverland.

The Boy Hunters followed along in sight of the Indian and the white youth, to watch their maneuvers. It was evident that the Indian was trailing a third person whom they could not see at all.

They had gone but a short way when Idaho Tom raised his rifle and fired upon the savage, just as the latter was raising his rifle to fire. With a cry of agony the Indian fell to the earth.

Then, with a shout of triumph, Idaho Tom bounded forward and was joined by another white youth who emerged from a clump of manzanitas. This person the Boy Hunters recognized as their beloved young friend, Frank Casleton.

Idaho Tom had saved Frank's life, instead of dogging his footsteps to take it.

The next moment Frank was joined by his friends amid the wildest excitement and loud-est shouts of joy.

Idaho Tom was introduced to the Boy Hunters, and, after explanations and desultory conversation, the young outlaw withdrew, once more to pursue his own course.

Then Frank and his friends sat down to talk over events that had transpired since their separation, and rejoice together over their reunion.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 284.)

DEADLY-EYE,

The Unknown Scout:

OR,

THE BRANDED BROTHERHOOD.

BY BUFFALO BILL,

THE CELEBRATED SCOUT, GUIDE, AND HUNTER-AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DUEL ON THE PRAIRIE.

WHEN THE UNKNOWN Scout, now also known to the reader under his real name of Alfred Carleton, left the camp-fire and his dying uncle, he mounted Prairie Gull and rode away across the prairie.

Shortly after sunrise he beheld a single horseman approaching, and upon a nearer view discovered him to be none other than Howard Talbot.

A cruel light flashed in the deer-like eyes of the Scout as he recognized the horseman, and, putting Prairie Gull into a rapid gallop, he started toward him.

Whether it was a guilty conscience of intending wrong to the Scout, or fear, we cannot tell, but Howard Talbot instantly turned to fly, when the Scout at once urged his horse forward in pursuit.

On they swept over the prairie, pursuer and pursued, the former slowly gaining, and the brow of Deadly-Eye growing sterner with each bound of his horse.

Across the rolling prairie Howard Talbot urged his steed, and heading for a piece of timber soon disappeared in its leafy recesses.

"Ha! he has taken cover and intends to fight me! So be it," said the Scout, and the next instant a look of disappointment was upon his face, for he suddenly saw the fugitive dart out on the other side of the notch and continue on across the prairie.

The next moment Prairie Gull had reached the timber and was circling around it, when, suddenly, a shrill call was heard, and glancing into the thicket, Deadly-Eye beheld the Red Bud of the Forest, just preparing to mount her white mare which stood near.

Instantly he wheeled alongside of the maiden, and in surprise said:

"What does the Red Bud here alone?"

"She came to seek the Stranger Scout. Yonder goes the annuity of Deadly-Eye—the man who taught the Rose of the Pawnees to love him—the man of many faces."

"Yes, I am now on his trail, Red Bud, for I would take his life, for did he not try to destroy the Pawnee maiden, and was she not ever kind to me when I lay sick and wounded in her wigwam? The Scout has a heart and has not forgotten. But, why did you seek me?"

"The Red Bud came to warn the great Scout that Many-Faces was his enemy who would strike him in the back, for Red Bud heard the words of the wicked man and the warrior from the great fort."

"Ha! that must have been Major Belden."

"The great Scout speaks straight; the two wicked braves were to kill Deadly-Eye, and the Many-Faces was to make one of the pale-face maidens his squaw."

"This is news, Red Bud; and I thank you for it. Now I must be off, after yonder running hound. Come!"

Away darted Prairie Gull, and close behind followed the steed of the Red Bud.

But, gradually the trained and swift horse began to draw away from his less fleet companion, and once more, with tremendous strides, he was drawing nearer the magnificent animal ridden by Howard Talbot.

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Buffalo Bill Again!

A MATCHLESS ROMANCE OF THE PLAINS AND FORTS!

Will be given in the coming issue of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, the opening chapters of the NEW SERIAL from the pen of the noted Plainsman, viz.:

THE PRAIRIE ROVER;

OR,

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Delighted as all have been with the straightforward but deeply exciting story involved in "Deadly Eye"—now running in these columns—the new romance will inspire enthusiastic admiration of the story-teller's skill and power.

It is a terribly real and impressive tale. Starting with tragic occurrences in a Southern State, whereby a high-spirited young Southerner is driven to desperation, it gives the motif for what follows, and we have

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THE SCOUT, GUIDE AND HUNTER-AUTHOR.

Sunshine Papers.

Wherein is Discoverable a Secret.

THERE was no doubt about it, Heloise was in a sadly demoralized condition. The girl had not been in possession of her usual health and strength for some months; she had recently passed through a combination of circumstances calculated to tell upon the nervous system, and, moreover, had been living amid excitement and change that had rendered her restless and irritable. From the last state of affairs Heloise had settled down to a quiet monotony of life and study. But she found with horror that she could not work—had no inclination to it, had not enough control over her mental powers to force them to a performance of their tasks. She was lazy and stupid, she told herself; and her laziness and stupidity took these forms. She avoided companionship, had variable appetite, was always tired and sleepy, yet slept restlessly, her mind laboring unceasingly through a labyrinth of troubled dreams, was cold and pale, and lost flesh rapidly.

Thus matters continued for some days, then there came a severe storm that Heloise tried to endure by devouring a novel. But even that had little charm, for she put it aside a moment she became entirely misty concerning what she had read. The next morning brought sunshine. Heloise thought of trying a walk, but the only place to which she cared to go was some three miles away, and she never could walk three miles, so she settled herself to study. But every word was meaningless. She found herself shivering over sentences that were only blanks to her mind, vaguely trying to analyze her last strange dreams, or going into little dozes. In sheer despair, at last, she arose and leaned her arms upon a table, meeting the reflection of her face in a mirror. Her eyes were dull, her lips bluish, her face ashy-white and expressionless. She looked several years older than her real number of birthdays. And then a sudden resolution flamed into Heloise's eyes. Loss of looks should accomplish what aught else had failed to do. She threw aside her wrapper, dressed trimly, stepped out into the morning air and sunshine, and choosing the railroad-track for her walk was soon taking swift steps toward the next town.

The air swept cool but clear against Heloise's face; the sunlight fell yellow and warm, and the rapid exercise soon sent the blood tingling in fast hot currents from the girl's face to her feet. And with this new delicious sensation thrilling her frame, the wind sweeping in welcome freshness against her flushing cheeks, the sunshine enveloping her in a glorious bath, she seemed to forget all things in the sheer joy of existence. Everything along the rather ordinary path, appeared rarely beautiful to Heloise. The earth was vivid after the rain, and covered with a brilliant network of diamond-sparks. The birds fluttered overhead, then dropped with a trill of song to hide in the dogwood trees among the tufts of orange berries. The odor of wild grapes, wet grasses, autumn woodlands, a field of tomatoes, the moist earth scented the air deliciously. A fringe of fine white flowers skirted the banks of the track, under a bridge a little stream ran gossiping to a company of grave cattle that fed meditatively in the meadow.

A whistle, a coil of smoke, a coming train! Heloise steps to one side until it has thundered past, then she walks on again with the soldierly plumes of the golden rod keeping stately guard on either hand, and occasionally a

tall, dried mullein stalk overlooking their ranks. Presently her swift coming startles a beautiful striped snake from his sun-bath on the track. He darts forward to escape, finds a little rift under the rail, and frantically disappears among the dewberry vines whose leaves are tanning to such rich tints of maroon.

There are great bushes of pompous purple thistles blooming along the banks, and white clusters of wild carrot and pungent yarrow, and meek looking little bunches of the fragrant, everlasting-flowered cutweed, and smilax trees—some with dark polished leaves, others with foliage just turning to gorgeous orange and scarlet hues—and an occasional graceful spray of wild asparagus bending lightly under a weight of fiery berries, and a few late pink heads of clover.

Then came woodland, with the red sandy track high up between, and the silent pools at its base reflecting fairy ferns, and the banks hung with dainty purple blossoms and the deep yellow cups of the wild lady-slipper, and the swamp maples hanging out banners of changing leaves amid the green ranks around; and then the outskirts of the town.

A little time to perform an errand and to rest, and Heloise set out on her return around the road. Up through the broad, shady, town street with its pompous new villas, all towers and bay-windows and flower-filled yards, and its handsome old homesteads with wide piazzas upheld by massive columns, and grand old shade-trees, and unbroken sweep of velvety sward, and fine gardens at the back, out into the country; past the farm-houses and harvest-fields, stacks of seared cornstalks and piles of yellow pumpkins, locust-groves and toll-gate, spashing stream and tangled thicket, Heloise walked swiftly, with always the low monotone of the distant tumbling ocean in the sunshiny air.

How excellent the dinner tasted to Heloise that day! How fascinating her studies were! What a lovely face the mirror reflected! The next day Heloise thought of some famous green-houses she would like to visit, about two miles away; and the next, that she had never been to the bay, only three miles from home; and so, day after day, she tramped miles along the country roads through the cool autumn weather, and grew strong and beautiful as a child of the wind and sun should. And Heloise gives credit to her friend, the mirror.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

I'VE ALWAYS NOTICED.

I HAVE always noticed that people are very apt to claim relationship, or acquaintance, with persons who have been, or are, great. I have known persons who possessed the name of Webster, and who could trace a relationship to the gifted statesman and talented dictionary maker of that name; yet wished to have it strictly borne in mind that there was not the most distant kinship to Professor Webster, the murderer. Had the latter named personage committed no murder, and won for himself a name as a great surgeon, doubtless scores of individuals, having the same cognomen, would have been calling themselves relatives of his. I think we had better win name and fame on our own individual merits and not endeavor to push ourselves forward on the strength of a name in which we have no right of property.

I know a name goes a great way with some people. Many who have the name of some gifted author, actor, painter or merchant, are silly enough to think the name is going to get them their living, and so sit idly down to wait for the honor or fortune that never comes. This world nowadays is too practical to care for a name, and it is only the sneaking sort who aim to profit by what some other has done. If you have the name of one who is good and great, don't disgrace it by being idle and lazy; make it as good and great in the present and future as it has been in the past; and to do that you must be good and great yourself.

I have always noticed that those people who boast a great deal about their Christian charity are very apt to leave it at home when they go to church, else we could not see so many put on such uncomfortable faces and disfigure their countenances with such ungracious looks when a stranger is shown into their pew. I often think, by the way some people show their antipathy to those who intrude in their church seats, that they have engaged a private box in heaven all to themselves, and do not expect that any one will be allowed to dare to contaminate them with their presence in the "land beyond the river." I cannot help growing warm on this subject. It makes me feel mortified that my fellow beings should act so shamefully in the house of God.

I have always noticed that those persons who are inclined to praise the simplicity of a Republican government and speak slightly of an Aristocratic one are the very beings who run after the potentates of other lands, are willing to kneel and kiss the hand of royalty, to treat monarchs better than they do the magnates of their own land, to keep servants in livery, have their armorial crests wherever they can get a chance to place them. Don't think I am blaming them for making themselves somewhat ridiculous; if they like to play the flunkey I am not going to prevent them, for, I think, it is "each for himself." It is the inconsistency of the thing I deplore, for what is it but inconsistency? I've known one of the Presidents of our own land to visit a city and not one cheer rent the air, and I have heard of females—I blush for my sex while I have to own it—who bottled up the water the Prince of Wales washed his hands in, when he made his tour through this country. That may sound ridiculous, but it is true, for all that.

I have always noticed that those who talk of the foolishness of mother's advice are the very first ones to seek it when they are in trouble. No one knows how precious mother's love and mother's advice can be, and if it were more often sought and acted upon we should not have so much of crime and misery around about us.

I have always noticed that the very individuals who are always grumbling about the degeneracy of the times are the ones who never strive to make the times better, but who do all in their power to clog the wheels of progress, to throw obstacles in the way of any new enterprise which promises to be a success and a benefit to mankind. They are like those persons who throw logs upon a railway track and then wonder why the train is so late, or pretend to wonder—that the train is demolished. They mumble about the conveniences of the "good old times" and never think of the inconveniences of those lamented days or the conveniences of the present. They never do the world one bit of good or make it any better for living in it. Of what use are they? Their example is bad and yet how many people follow so bad an example. If we were all to sit down and grumble over the degeneracy of the times would our good and noble workers for the advancement of mankind come from! There's a question for you.

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

My Balloon Trip With Donaldson.

I REMEMBER very vividly my trip with the lately extinguished Donaldson into the ethereal heavens.

He had been at me for several days to go up; he said he wanted me to go up with him, whether I came down with him or not. He said I would not lose much time by it, and that time would not lose much by me. All he wanted was *ballast*, and he thought I would answer the purpose better than anything else.

I finally consented, out of respect for him.

It was in Cincinnati, and the balloon was full and anxious to start.

When I got into the basket I wanted to get out again because I heard him give the order to cut the rope; I expected they would not cut the rope. I didn't want any ropes cut because there was no telling where the balloon would go after it got a start.

I had never climbed a tree without getting dizzy-headed, and if we were two or three miles high it would, I thought, be a little too big a jump for only two men to attempt.

I suggested that we swim along the street, about six feet up, and then we could easily jump out in case of accident.

He said he would do that, but when they cut the rope the balloon went up so fast that I had to hold on to myself for fear of falling out.

The professor regaled me with the scientific effects of falling out of a balloon at different heights, but he said if a man under such circumstances would only think to slacken his speed when he got within ten feet of the earth, and go down slow, no matter how hard the ground was he wouldn't be hurt.

He said that often when a mile or two above the earth the balloon would go off and leave him up there, and he had experienced great loneliness, and had much difficulty in climbing down.

He spoke of the marriage in his balloon a short time before, and said it was a wedding in high life; that it was a hy-menal affair—that, among the ropes they seemed high-strung, and that it was a hi-falutin thing altogether. He said, also, that they laid claims to belonging somewhat to the upper class. He considered it to be the height of folly for it would be apt to make that couple feel themselves above common people.

When I looked down I began to wish I was a poor laborer in a cellar without any danger of falling up. I would not have been very particular about wages either.

When I asked him how high we were he said if my countenance was any indication we were about three thousand miles, but that his barometer only said a mile and a half.

He told me I needn't be so scared for I could get back in twenty seconds if I had a mind to jump.

I asked him what we would do if the balloon would turn upside down.

He said if we were not buoyant enough in the air we could carry the balloon upward we would have to spread out our ears for parachutes and jump out.

I suggested the idea of having another balloon along, smaller than the other, so if one burst we could get into that, and still be saved for the benefit of our wives' relations.

He told me if it was possible it would be better if I wouldn't shake the basket so. I did my best to comply with his wishes, but the atmosphere was chilly.

He threw out more ballast and we kept on going up, and my spirits kept on going down. My feet were a little too light to make me extraordinarily comfortable, and I requested him to rein up the machine and let us have a rest, and told him I didn't like to be where there was so much nothing around as there was there.

I told him I occupied a great deal of space on earth but that I had too much of it here.

He said if I'd keep quiet he would give me a stick of candy, and before long he would let the gas out of the balloon, roll it up, put it under his arm, and we would go down the shortest road we could find.

He said I should often burst, and in that case a man either had to let it come down alone, or come down with it.

I said it would be nice if they could have a derrick and let it down with ropes, in a disaster of that kind.

He said so, too.

He thought there would soon be a time when all the traveling would be done by balloons, and bad roads would cease to be much of an obstacle.

I told him I never knew before how good it was to walk in the mud, even.

I asked him if he thought balloons could ever be made to carry the world, and long.

He said that the wind was generally a hard thing to run against, worse than a rock, but thought if some shield could be put around the balloon to keep the wind from striking it there would be no trouble at all in going any direction.

I said so, too.

I wanted to step down and out.

He told me that if we went up where the air was rarer we could get out and walk around and exercise our legs, but if I wanted to go down badly he could tie a rope around my neck and let me down as easily as possible, or that I could ride down on the next bag of sand he put out.

When I looked out the earth was clear out of sight, and there was no telling in what direction we were going, as there seemed to be no sign-boards or mile-stones along the route.

It is an awful feeling to feel that you have gone up, at least above the earth. We were beyond the region of kites.

Donaldson seemed perfectly cool and self-possessed.

I was perfectly cold but not self-possessed.

We took a drink, I am sorry to say, but I was glad to take it. It made me so light headed that I was on the point of jumping out and walking down. I forgot everything but the solemn fact that I lived on the earth below. I couldn't forget that. I was above everything but that. I wanted to go home.

Home never seemed so dear—the cholera, chicken-pox, measles, dui-bells and everything else to the contrary notwithstanding. I asked him if he wouldn't pull the machine down, and he did so.

We struck a cloud and broke it all up into little pieces. When we struck the earth the shock was felt in China. I was hauled home in three wagons. It took six weeks to put me in shape again, and mend me with Spalding's glue.

It was the most frightful ascent I ever made. I sat upon the ragged edge of death all the time. This is a private description. My published account at the time may vary a little from this. This is written after reflection. I don't want to rise above my sphere, nor do I wish to be a balloonist again.

Yours for low,
WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Topics of the Time.

—Americans as engineers and army officers are in special favor in Europe. The recent selection by the Austrian Government of an American engineer's plan for improving the navigation of the river Danube, is a gratifying instance of European concession to American merit. English, French, German, Austrian, Italian and Russian engineers all competed for the work. The Austrian plan will cost about \$13,000,000, and American contractors have taken the whole job. It will be remembered that when the war-vessels sunk at the siege of Sevastopol were to be raised, an American engineer (Col. Gowan) was called to the work and accomplished a wonderful task. In the Army and Construction Bureau of the Egyptian Government Americans are in the highest places; and now we are informed that to General Joseph E. Johnston, of Confederate army fame, the Khedive has offered the chief command of his armies, at a princely salary. In Russia Americans have been heavy railway contractors, and many American-made locomotives and cars are now in use there. The grand encouragement which this country offers for the exercise of the talent that is in a man is telling in the brilliant record we are making in almost all departments of labor and science.

—Our reference, last week, to the remains of a race of giants lately discovered in Kentucky, raises the question of the possibility of such a race. We have Bible authority that giants were in those days, and tradition—which is unwritten history—is tantamount in repeating the story of the big men of old. Occasional modern instances come to verify the fact that men fifteen feet in height are not a myth. The Chevalier Serogy, in the caverns of Teneriffe, discovered teeth and was not less than fifteen feet in height. In 1880, near Rouen, was found the skeleton of a giant whose skull held a bushel of corn; he stood nineteen feet high. In the island of Sicily were found no less than three mammoth skeletons—two near Palermo, measuring respectively thirty and thirty-four feet, and one near Mazza measuring thirty feet; the head of the last was said to be the size of a hog-head, while each of his teeth weighed no less than five ounces. It is assumed we know, that these are not the remains of men; but to the true naturalist a simple tooth is as much evidence as a whole skeleton—it determines at once the species to which it belongs. In the remote eras, when the megatherium roamed over the land, and the ichthyosaurus scoured the rivers, a man fifteen feet in height was not disproportioned, but, on the contrary, proportionate to the life around him, and the inference is fair that, if man was a contemporary of the fossils, he had dimensions equal to him then, as he is now, master of the situation.

—There have been recently made changes in the postal rates of America and European States, which materially diminish the cost of communication between the two hemispheres. The States of Europe, the United States and Egypt have decided themselves into a postal union, and have decided on a uniform rate. The cost of sending to Europe letters weighing a half-ounce is covered by a five-cent stamp; any single newspaper not exceeding four ounces will be transmitted for two cents; miscellaneous printed matter can be mailed at the rate of two cents per two ounces; and the ordinary one-cent postal cards will reach Europe if an additional cent stamp be affixed to them. This revised scale, so far as France is concerned, does not come into operation till the 1st of January next; and as yet Spain is out of the union. The postal union of the latter country therefore will continue as heretofore.

—The recent death, from hydrophobia, of a little girl, at Rutherford Park, New Jersey, adds another incontestible proof to the cases where the mere bite of a dog in play will produce the dreadful disease. The child was bitten in the lip by a favorite dog, last June. The wound was very slight and healed very soon, and the bite was almost forgotten, when, a short time ago, she was attacked by the disease, and after terrible suffering. The case of Mrs. Noyes, the actress (Ada Clare), was nearly analogous. Her pet dog, not affected with rabies, bit her on the nose, and she died an awful death. The dog was shot the butcher in New York last season, is yet alive and well, and never has been mad, and yet his slight "snap" at the great strong man produced death from hydrophobia. We ask: What are all the dogs in the United States to say nothing of the veritable character of verbs in their different moods and tenses—the foreigner has a hard time in "mastering English."

—A fiddle improves by age and use; a piano does not, neither does a bell. There is, perhaps, a slight improvement for the first few years, but afterward the quality deteriorates. Men, we know, is altered by repeated and long-continued hammering. Thump a piece of iron and you change the quality of its magnetism; the shock of the waves modifies the magnetism of an iron ship; and some of the music is knocked out of a bell by long-continued use of the clapper.

—In the interior decoration of costly houses at the present time there is not only a revival, to a considerable extent, of the beautiful art of carving in its higher artistic branches, but also of the art of embossing and gilding leather for similar purposes. The effect produced by this means is very rich. Embossed leather, ornamented in gold, silver, and colors, was largely manufactured in former times, first in Spain, Italy, and Flanders, and then in Germany, France, and England, being much used as tapestry for rooms.

—The existence of petroleum in the western part of Pennsylvania was discovered and written about as early as 1623 by a Frenchman who visited the ground. In 1789, one hundred and sixty years after, the *Massachusetts Magazine* says this of the "oil": "In the northern part of Pennsylvania there is a creek called Oil creek, which empties into the Allegheny river. It issues from a spring, on the top of which floats an oil, similar to that called Barbadoes tar, and from which one may gather several gallons a day. The troops sent to guard the western posts halted at the same spring, collected some of the oil, and bathed their joints with it. This gave them great relief from the rheumatism with which they were afflicted. The water, of which the troops drank freely, operated as a gentle purge."

—An Englishman who thinks that he can write better than Bret Harte has appeared in one of the British journals. Here is one of his poems:

It was Bob, the Bloomin' Flower,
That he bow'd him on Poker Flat;
He'd goug'd a few down Gligat way,
But no one complained o' that.
He scored his stiffs on the heft of his knife—
Forty, I've heern 'em say;
It might have been more—Bob kept his ac-
cuse.

In a loolish sorter way,
Bob warn't a' angel ter look at,
And the Bible it warn't his book;
He swore the most oaths that war swore in the camp.

Or blarney'd I'm mistook,
But he warn't a' outer-out bad 'un,
And he'd draw a heart you could touch;
And he never drewed iron on boy or wan,
As didn't pervoke him much.

Readers and Contributors.

To CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned unless stamps accompany the inclosure, for such returns.—No correspondence of any nature is permitted in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as a "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note also paper as most convenient for the compositor, leaving off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We accept "A Ruse de Guerre," "Why He Resigned Her," "The Diamond Cross," "A General Understanding," "Only a Woman's Glove," "Tied to the Track," "Disposing of a Rival," "The Twelfth Juror," "Rosy," "A Very Smart Fool," "Yes, and Yes Again."

Declined: "The Vagrant," "Lines on Gettysburg," "A Strange Story," "Fifteen Years Ago," "Paul Morton" (3c. due on postage), "Thrown Overboard at Sea," "A Wonderful Boy," "The Random Tragedy," "Ox and Horse," "Miss Neville's Best Enemy," "A Shot in the Dark."

ADA M. A. Have written the lady and said No! CURTIUS, Charles Francis Adams is nearly seventy years of age.

J. C. F. The poem on Gettysburg is not yours, but is the work of some master-hand. No stamp for return.

MARK, Chicago. Go into any drug-store and look at the U. S. Dispensatory. It gives the recipe required.

ORLANDO D. Walking before breakfast, on an empty stomach, is like running a locomotive without fuel or water.

MISS N. A. E. Dream Books are usually very silly affairs. The *Dime Dream Book* is a striking exception to the rule.

OLD PROB'S ENEMY. The weather reports are only approximations or guesses at what is to come—probabilities, in fact.

LONG BRANCH. Can't make out your postal card note. If correspondents want queries answered they must write them out intelligibly.

TRUSS, Boston. No person can become a scholar except through long and arduous study. The books to use some well-informed friend had better select for you, with your own co-operation.

C. S. G. The amount of platitudes, and of dreary "self-assertion" in the discussion of the "woman question," renders such a discussion wholly unfit for the popular press. We certainly want none of it.

QUESTION NO. 10. We have no large churches in this country—large as compared with churches in Europe. St. Peter's, at Rome, holds 54,000 people; Milan Cathedral, 37,000; St. Paul's, at Rome, 32,000; St. Paul's, in London, 38,000; St. Stephen's, "Tabernacle," in London, has a capacity of 5,000; Dr. Hall's "Million-dollar Church," in New York, only seats 2,000.

CEAR STREET ACCOUNTANT. The *arithmetical* rules for computing interest are but little used in business. We cannot give the rules in use for all per cents and all periods. For four per cent, multiply the principal by the number of days, and divide by right hand figure from the product and divide by nine. For five per cent, multiply by the number of days and divide by half-ounce.

PARK ROWMAN. Mr. Shillaber, of Boston, is by no means the originator of Mrs. Partington. Mrs. Malaprop, in Sheridan's noted play of "The Rivals," had the original from which Mrs. Partington was copied. Mrs. Partington, it is in the same splendid comedy that the dogmatic Sir Anthony Absolute, and the knave and coward, Bob Acres, are introduced.

ALASDAUN. Nothing so good to keep fleas from dogs as strong soap-suds bath every few days, putting a little oil of pennyroyal in the water. Always remain quiet after meals. Exercise is a good thing. Always "take your nap" an hour or more after eating, or just before a meal. A sulphur bath will bleach the skin. Exercise is a good thing. Always "take your nap" an hour or more after eating, or just before a meal. A sulphur bath will bleach the skin. Exercise is a good thing. Always "take your nap" an hour or more after eating, or just before a meal. A sulphur bath will bleach the skin.

HELEN G. Your MS. shows nothing especially promising in the way of invention—wherein all true authorship finds its success. You punctuate very well, when you try.—A cautious editor, for one year old. It needs, however, very favorable conditions of sandy soil and warmth of atmosphere.

OSCAR E. Your idea of spending a few months in New York, before starting in business for yourself, is a good one, as you say you can well spare the necessary time and money. But, without acquiring a large stock of valuable information, and find the trip profitable in various ways, if you stick to your resolution to "keep business always in the foreground, and see what it does for you," you will find it will afford you before you start the business you propose in your own city.

MOSES D. B. We do not remember the particular item you refer to. Always name number of paper in which it appeared. The probability of the quite recent (in a geological sense) existence of a continent in the North Pacific Ocean, and the discovery of Asia, is greatly strengthened by the last year's explorations and soundings of the U. S. Survey Ship *Tuscarora*. The soundings traced a plateau of vast dimensions abounding in volcanic mountains, many of them not reaching the surface of the ocean, and others which do so forming the numberless islands of the Pacific. The discovery of coral rocks proves that this sinking has continually been taking place during several centuries, and observations of the coast will undoubtedly reveal the fact that it has not yet ceased.

CALLIE G. A. Patterson, writes: "I am very much attached to a gentleman who is five years younger than myself, and many of my friends advise me not to marry him at that account. He is handsome, and our marriage will lift me from a life of struggle for daily bread to one of comparative ease and comfort. Do you think that the fact of the difference in our ages should prevent our marriage? We are both under thirty." It is a good rule for the husband to be older than his wife, and more experienced in the lifelong partnership. But, as neither wisdom nor strength can be wholly measured by years, this rule should certainly not be an imperative one. Where the attachment between the parties is strong and sincere, and the disparity of years no greater than in your case, there is nothing too much of human nature to expect friendly advice to prevent the match.

WELL-WISHER, Grafton, N. H., among other matters, says: "I am anxious to send for the most agreeable and agreeable return hospitality by a gift. I have a friend here, married and with a family, whose wife takes pity upon my bachelor loneliness, and invites me frequently to join her family circle. Can I with propriety make her a present? We should advise you, as there are children, to make your present to the baby. A gift to the mother is perfectly proper under such circumstances, and if the children are over ten years old your gift had better be made to the mother. But if there is a baby you may offer silver jewelry suitable for a child, or handsome embroidery, and are certain to please everybody. The parents will never object to this return for their hospitality."

B. M. B. (postal address not given) writes: "I have been courting a young lady to whom I am devotedly attached for nearly a year. I think she is attached to

THE TOUCH OF HANDS.

BY FRANK M. IMBRIE.

One soft September dawning
The sun hung low in the blue,
When the darling garden favorites
Drank the morning dew;
When balmy zephyrs lulled
O'er the graves of wayside flowers,
That in dying gave an elixir to
The summer's wearying hours—
When the haze of purple deepened
On the green-enamelled mold,
As the sunrise laid, all softly,
On its glow a crown of gold,
Strewed on rilled lawn and upland
The grasses withered, lay,
In their quaker suit of meekness
Donned 'neath August's scorching ray.
The cry, "Bob White!" in the meadow,
Through green-guarded fields,
Where the feasts of golden splendor
A royal banquet yields;
The orchards stood like temples
Hung with lamps of red and gold,
The twisted, festooned curtains
Up from their glory rolled.
The peaches caught the radiance
From Aurora's ruddiest streaks,
Then, with willful pleasure pressed them,
To their luscious, downy cheeks.
And I, with sweet enchantment
Born of this happy scene,
Felt power mesmeric, thrilling,
In the hand I held in mine.
Saw the rosy color surging
Up the creamy, peachy glow
Of the dimpled cheek, happened
Just to touch, by chance—your know!
And it seemed as if the tender,
Holliest thought of youth and prime
Crowded into sweet September,
My darling's life and mine!
Maybe the whispers gossiped
To the listening flowers and birds,
For two happy hearts ran over
With a new-born, awakened words;
The yellow sun crept slowly
To his throne of pale gold,
The dower lips parted sweetly
Said, "The olden tale told!"

Who Wrought the Havoc?

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

It was the worst blow Carroll had ever received; and as he stood there, white to the very lips, with stormy anguish in his eyes, and a perfect tempest of disappointment and anger gathering over his face, Una Lynn wondered, for a second, at the havoc she had wrought. Only for a second—then the look of pitying wonder died from her eyes, and the old scorn resumed its wonted place.

She played her part fearfully well; and as she stood there, every motion a grace, every gesture a poem, it was little wonder that Carroll thought what a blind fool he had been to suppose she, the reigning queen of the exclusive set into which Carroll had been received because of his splendid voice that could entertain people so—that Una Lynn, born to the purple, could care for him—a Bohemian, with only a face and a figure and a voice, to pit against the moneybags of Lynn Port.

But he hadn't stopped to think when he might have stopped. He had worshiped her so madly—from the first, from the very first. He had indulged in such bright, improbable dreams—strangely at variance with his prudent, sagacious nature—but nevertheless sweet, because they savored of improbability.

She had been very gracious to him; and in his delicious infatuation, Carroll did not see she was graciously sweet to every one; he had only seen the smiles she gave him, the glances she bestowed on him, and it was strange, yet not strange, this proud, reserved, passion-hearted man poured at the girl's feet the oblation of his life—because to such men as Carroll their love is their life.

So it had come to pass; and, as he stood before the woman who had charmed him on to his disenchantment, it seemed to him the very sunshine itself was darkness; it seemed to him that in all this world or the world to come, there could be nothing so awful to endure as that clear, intense scorn in Una Lynn's eyes.

It was all the worse, that she had before been so gracious to him. It was the harder to endure, because he never for a moment supposed he would have had it to endure—at her fair, merciless hands.

For a second Carroll stood mute before her, like a man who had unexpectedly come upon a Medusa head. He, looking at her—at her perfect face, with its carved features, its clear, honest, scornful eyes—with a curious agony at his heart, that if he had been capable of translating into words, would have expressed the idea that something had happened him that, at one blow, destroyed all hope, and joy, and faith, all kindness for him forever.

He was not a romantic, or used to winging his way to high flights of sentimental fancy, or soaring emotions; consequently, when reason asserted herself after that momentary deadly stroke from Una's fair lips, the first consciousness was a blighting disappointment, that to Carroll meant more, and was more, than the disappointments of a score of ordinary men who can love, and love, and love again; and the next sensation—and it was aroused by the peculiar flashing of the girl's blue eyes, the light curl on her lips, was the anger, the wrath that she had dragged him on—to this.

He misunderstood her so, and she—she was so perfectly unconscious of causing such a tumult in his brain and heart. If her eyes were scornful, to him, she certainly never meant to express more than a decided refusal, as she had expressed to several men, who, less sensitive, less earnest, than this lover, who had laid his very soul at her feet, had not discovered scorn or contempt in her honest, frank, fearless eyes.

She was the first to bring an end to the odd silence that had fallen on them, that lasted several minutes.

"You are angry with me, Mr. Carroll. I see it in your face and eyes. You are angry, when you ought to be sorry, because you have put me to a great pain."

Carroll's white face flushed.

"I ought to be sorry!—yes, I ought to be very pitiful for the great pain I have caused you. I am very sorry."

He said it with a laugh, that was filled with the bitterness of his soul.

Una looked quietly at him, her blue eyes cool, outspoken, friendly in their straight glance.

"You didn't comprehend me at all, Mr. Carroll; if you did you would know how it hurts me to refuse what you seem to regard such a blessing. I am not so cruel as you seem to think me."

Carroll was too heart-sore to accept her words.

"Cruel!—what is it but cruelty that blasts a man's life at its onset? Do you call it kindness, that turns a man's spirit to wormwood, that shuts him up in a second from any future hope of happiness?"

His voice was so harsh, so discordant—his voice that was generally melody itself. And Una's eyes grew full of silent sympathy as she answered:

"I think it is a kindness, Mr. Carroll, that I tell you I cannot love you as you deserve to be loved! All those other gloomy pictures you have drawn will fade away soon. Is it not a truer kindness than if I should—should become your wife—and then, you should learn the sad truth?"

Her voice was gentle, low—so sweet that it almost maddened him.

"But if you were my wife you should love me. You would not be able to help it. I would make you love me—my own great love would compel you. Una—Una! do you know what you have done to me?"

He covered his face with his hands—she saw them quiver with pain; and for one brief moment a strangely tender pity stole over her, at sight of this rejected lover's desolation.

"I am sorry," she said, simply, honestly; then started, as Carroll sprang up from his chair.

"So you say—but, before God, I don't believe you! Some day, though—in the future—you may taste the very dregs you have forced to my lips. Not till then will you be sorry—not till then will you comprehend the agony you have caused me."

His pride, his manhood was rising from the wreck of ruined hope—rising unhurt, undaunted, in the very glory of their strength. And Una thought, as she looked at him, what a different man he was from any she ever had seen—how superbly he towered above the ruin she knew she had wrought—and she held out her hand, impulsively.

"I tell you I do not deserve such an opinion from you. I repeat I am deeply sorry—I insist we shall part friends."

Her blue eyes were almost black, now, with intense earnestness—and yet, there was no coquetry in them—no sign or suspicion of relenting. Simply the frank, honest look that had shivered her very soul.

He smiled—it was like a moonbeam flickering over an iceberg—and just touched her warm fingers.

"The compact can do no harm—I think I am past all human hurt, after to-day. Certainly your friend, Miss Lynn."

Una drew her hand suddenly away—his indifferent sarcasm pained her to the quick.

"I am very foolish indeed to care for even so much. Good-afternoon, Mr. Carroll."

He bowed magnificently.

"You are foolish—since we will never see each other again. Good-afternoon, Miss Lynn."

And that was their parting—after all his dreams! that their parting—and, as he walked to and fro in his room, ten minutes later, with deathly-white face, clenched hands and bloodshot eyes, Carroll swore to conquer this passion, though it took his life.

And Una—strangely quiet, wearing a strangely wondering expression on her proud, pure face—went among her guests again, feeling that there had occurred an episode in her life.

"You have positively decided, Una, not to marry Regy Varnley?"

Miss Lynn arranged an aigrette daintily in her braids before she answered.

"There, Aggie, will that do? does the diamond sheaf like against my hair? No; I never shall marry Mr. Varnley."

"You are an enigma, child. Pray tell me what is the fault with Mr. Varnley?"

Una laughed—there was a faint hint of sadness in the sweet cadence, but Aggie Fenn did not notice it.

"Does the fact of my refusal of Regy Varnley imply a fault in him? Rather—according to the theory of people generally—it infers a grievous fault in me, in not being sensible of the honor he does me."

"And the theory is right, Una. What girl in her senses would refuse a man as desirable in every particular as Mr. Varnley?"

Aggie rocked vehemently to and fro in Una's little pink-satin rocking-chair.

"Perhaps, at twenty-seven, I am getting childish," Una said, pleasantly. "But there still remains the stubborn fact that I shall not marry Mr. Varnley."

Aggie groaned dolorously.

"Is there a man in all this hemisphere that you would marry, pray?"

A faint tinge of wood-rose glowed for a second on Una's cheek; then she answered in a grave, unexcited tone:

"Yes, there is one man—and only one man."

Aggie sprang excitedly up.

"Of all things! there actually is a man so favored? Who on earth is he? Una, don't torture me."

"Am I torturing you? I should think, just at present, only this rose stalk I am snipping and bending so unmercifully was being tortured."

Aggie sunk back in her chair again, breathlessly.

"Una Lynn—will I ever understand you? Tell me, do you have you been keeping yourself for all these years? Is he handsome? Is he rich? have I ever seen him? will I ever see him?"

Una laughed.

"Am I to answer all those questions at once? Suppose you send them in installments."

Then, of a sudden, her half-roguish, half-indifferent air deserted her, and with a little sob she threw herself on the floor beside her friend, and hid her face in her lap, her figure trembling perceptibly from head to foot.

Aggie never said a word, but gently caressed the beautiful hair; and the two women waited in silence, one to hear, the other to speak.

Directly Una raised her head—her face a revelation of proud tenderness.

"I will tell you his name—the name of the man I am going to win for my own—the name I am saying over and over—the name of the man I love with all the heart, mind, strength, soul and body God has given me. It is—Carroll."

She said it under her breath, with a sort of reverential awe, that went straight to Aggie's heart.

"Oh, darling! and you will see him to-night, won't you? To-night, for the first time since he has returned from Germany! Una!—dear Una! how happy you must be!"

"Happy!"

Una said it to herself, an hour later, as she stood among the guests in Mrs. Conway's parlors, waiting to hear Carroll's name announced—watching, with eyes that were black with excitement, for the first glimpse of his never-forgotten face.

There was a stir among the guests, a murmur of expectation, then—his name from the usher, then—she saw him, tall, haughty, splendid, bowing over his hostess's hand.

Ten minutes of dizzy joy, of agonizing anticipation, and then—

"Do you remember Miss Lynn, Mr. Carroll?"

She looked up—into his eyes that smiled in sublime forgetfulness of what had crucified her a thousand times.

"I do not think any one would forget Miss Lynn. I remember we agreed to part as friends—and friends never forget."

His hand closed over hers with a contact that thrilled her from head to foot. She looked him in the eyes then—one of her frank, straight glances, yet tempered with an expression he had never seen there before.

"You are right, Mr. Carroll. Friends never forget. And in token—I renew my part of the compact."

She took his arm for a promenade; and in ten minutes the rumor went forth that Carroll and Miss Lynn had resumed their old-time intimacy.

A month later, it was reported that Miss Lynn had succumbed at last—that she was engaged to Carroll; and when Aggie Fenn, in the sacred confidence of a lifelong friendship, asked her the truth of the rumor, Una held up her forefinger, where was a plain, wide gold band that inside bore the legend:

"UNA—CARROLL."
"Amour."

There were times when Una would look at her ring, and wonder, with a delicious sort of puzzlement, how it had ever happened—after all the years that had stretched so blankly between them; she sometimes fairly held her breath for fear lest something should occur that night, even now—with the wedding-day only a fortnight off—to defraud her of her happiness.

She was forever in a world of perfect bliss. She watched and waited for her lover's coming with an intensity of eager love that she never had dreamed she was capable of. She received his kisses, and returned them with a thanksgiving in her heart; she caressed his hair, his whiskers, and wondered that it was permitted her so to do.

She was wildly, deliciously happy—only praying the days and the hours to speed them on till the day she went to him, forever and forever.

And all this while Carroll was the kingly lover whose dainty, deferential attentions to his betrothed made many a girl's heart throb with envy. All this while he was faultless in his demeanor to the woman he had so easily won, and if the memory of other days ever haunted him there was no sign, beyond a strange smile at times in his eyes, or a hard, terse line around his mouth when no one saw it.

So the days went on; the preparations were completed, and then the day itself came, when Una was to cross the narrow threshold that divided her from her one, only happiness.

She had parted from her lover that same morning; he had driven around with a tiny bouquet, about ten o'clock, and given it to her, with a kiss.

"Carry it to the altar, Una, where I am to meet you. Don't take it from the box until you reach the church-door, or the cold air will snap the petals of the roses. I have written a little love-message on the narrow silk that ties it—promise me you won't look at it until you stand at the altar. Good-by, darling—until one o'clock. This is our last good-by, isn't it?"

He kissed her, again and again, then went away, leaving the bouquet in its box, with its message within.

It was delightful to Una—this romantic idea of her lover; and she composed a hundred little notelets while she was being dressed, such as she was so sure this message was.

Then in her elegant bridal array she was driven to the church, where her friends were waiting her, with her precious bouquet in her hands, waiting to be opened.

She went up the aisle on her father's arm, her bridal party following, and took her place to await the coming of the groom.

Then she took out her flowers, her cheeks flushing, her lips smiling at the tender conceit.

The fragrance of the white roses and the double white violets arose like an offering; and she smoothed out the silken ribbon, and read the message:

"I told you in future days you should drink of the cup you once put to my lips. I told you you should comprehend my sufferings—have my words come true? To know I renounce you at the foot of the altar—to know I have repudiated the drama out, because you once had no mercy on me—to know when you read these words I shall be miles away, speeding still further, never to see your fair face again, are you satisfied, in knowing all this—that you appreciate, at length, some of the agony you caused me, that I swore to avenge?"

She read it, straight through, and no one saw her dying face under the veil; no one observed the writing on the ribbon; no one saw her tear it off and stuff it wildly in her mouth, behind the teeth that clenched in convulsive agony, as the last instant thought of her brain was to hide from the world both her shame and her shame!

Then they saw her sway, and fall; then, amid all the noise, the confusion, the bustle, there came a voice that brought a pang to every heart—save the poor broken one, covered with costly satin and priceless lace:

"She has not been strong enough to endure the excitement. She is dead of heart-disease."

Ah, truly of heart-disease! They buried her in her bridal robes, with her flowers in her hand; and over her coffin people said, softly, that she must have had a presentiment that her lover was a rogue, and that was what killed her.

And over her grave friends pause, pitying, and ask each other if anything has ever been heard of handsome, wicked Carroll, who never came to meet his bride at the holy altar.

My Ride for Life.

BY "BUFFALO BILL."

AUGUST, 1868, found me post scout at Fort Larned, Kansas, under the command of Captain Danglefield Parker.

The fort was garrisoned by two companies of infantry, and a company of the 10th Cavalry, under Captain Nolan, whose duties consisted in securing the mails between Fort Dodge and Zara, rather than service about the post.

At the fort also were Dick Curtis, interpreter for the fort, and John Smith—of whom my readers have doubtless before heard—interpreter for Colonel Ed Wynkoop, the popular Indian agent.

About this time we were daily expecting the Kiowas and Comanches to come in for their rations, under the celebrated chiefs, Santa-ta—a warrior lately much troubled in mind on account of his pugilistic disposition toward the whites—Lone Wolf, Sitawore, Kicking Bird, and many other prominent rosters of the same tribes.

With these chiefs, Major-General Hazen, who was hourly expected to arrive from Fort Harker, was to hold a grand council, so that we at the fort anticipated stirring times to break the monotony of camp life.

At last the Indians arrived and pitched

their *tepes* on the banks of the Pawnee Fork, a few miles from the post, and we beheld Santa-ta in all his warlike glory, but not mounted upon his favorite war steed, but calmly riding in a vehicle, the nature of which was doubtful, for it was a cross between an ambulance, carriage and wagon, and had been presented to the red worthy by the Government.

I suppose for his gallant services in running all the officers out of the billiard saloon at Fort Dodge, the previous summer.

The vehicle, however, was in a dilapidated condition, being broken in many places, and strengthened with thongs of green buffalo-hide.

The harness was as great a mystery as is "boarding-house hash," one of the horse-collars being put on wrong side up, and other mistakes equally ludicrous in character.

Being asked why he had not greased the wheels, the worthy savage replied that he could not afford to feed the wagon with what his squaws and papooses needed, which was a rough kick at the Government.

Santa-ta was accompanied by the other chiefs, before mentioned, and General Hazen arriving, the pow-wow began, with considerable begging on the part of the Indians, which resulted in the distribution of beef, sugar, flour, coffee, and other supplies.

After receiving their rations, the Indians returned to their *tepes*, comparatively happy, to await the arrival of the beef-cattle then on the way from Texas, and which had been promised them.

For several days they kept quiet, but then commenced getting more and more uneasy as the time passed by for the coming of the cattle, and neither hide nor hair had been seen.

Thus a week flitted away, and the Indians openly expressed their discontent regarding the non-appearance of the "wo-haws," as they call cattle, probably getting the word from the drivers of ox-teams.

The cause of the anxiously looked-for cattle not putting in an appearance we could not imagine, and we at the fort saw with anxiety that "Mr. Lo" was getting riled, for he used threats to cause our guards to be doubled, and the scouts to be on the alert.

On August 29th General Hazen signified his intention of returning to Fort Harker, and leaving Fort Larned early in the morning in his ambulance, he carried with him an escort of ten men, infantry soldiers, riding in a six-mule wagon, and myself as scout and guide.

I was riding on a mule, and being the only mounted man, had to ride a few hundred yards in advance of the general in his ambulance, while the soldiers' team brought up the rear.

It was a fine morning, the day we left the fort, the road in good condition, and we continued rapidly on until we arrived at Pawnee Rock, where we halted for rest.

Pawnee Rock is situated some two miles from the banks of the Arkansas river, about midway between Forts Larned and Zara, and is known far and wide.

After resting a few moments, we proceeded on our way toward Fort Zara, where we arrived at one o'clock, having come thirty miles.

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lodes, and unpacking their ponies, while their lazy bucks of husbands lay about idle as pick-pockets.

When our party was discovered, and in the midst a prisoner, a loud whoop of joy went up from the camp, and they assembled to give me a good welcome.

Some twenty of the Indian boys jumped into the river and came to meet us, and we met on a sandbar, when they commenced pelting me with handfuls of wet sand, which worked on my feelings pretty hard, and kept my head lively, dodging from side to side to keep from being hit in the eyes.

At length we arrived upon the other bank, and I was immediately surrounded by about three hundred, who, I was sure, meant mischief, for the warriors were all in their war-paint, and I observed one fellow carrying a bleeding scalp on a pole.

One of the first Indians I recognized in the gang was Santa-ta, and all of the band at once recognized me, for we had met before, and they seemed as delighted as though they had sat down on a prickly pear briar.

The Indians who had captured me were in the meantime holding a council with Santa-ta, who, after a while, came up to me and asked where the general had gone.

I told him, and then he wanted to know where were the soldiers who went with him? I told him that they were at Zara, and it occurred to me that he would ask about the wo-haws—beef cattle—and I determined to tell him a lie, for they were most anxious to get the beaver.

Then he asked me why I left the soldiers and came back alone.

Now was the time to get my work in by telling a lie, so I replied that we had met the herd of beef-cattle and that the general had sent me back to tell the Indians that their wo-haws were coming, and see that the officer at the fort turned them at once over to the chiefs.

This announcement created a sensation, and then Santa-ta asked me why I had not told his young men this when they met me at Pawnee Rock.

I replied that I had not time to tell them ere I was seized, and knocked over the head, and then I got my mad up.

At this a pow-wow followed among Santa-ta and his warriors, and then the inquisitive old chief returned to his catechism and asked me how far away were the cattle.

I told him they must be three miles off, and then he wanted to know where they were going into camp for the night.

I replied "on Ash Creek," which is about half-way between Pawnee Rock and Fort Larned.

I could easily see that he wanted to get the cattle, and asked him why he had left the fort before their arrival, and his reply was that his people had become tired of waiting, and had concluded to go over on Snake Creek and hunt until the cattle came.

I knew this was a lie, but wisely refrained from giving him the information, and asked why his young men had treated me so, and made me a prisoner.

He laughed, and said they wanted to see if I was brave, but did not intend to hurt me.

I said nothing, but quietly rubbed my head where I had been hit, and kept dark about having seen the fresh scalp, which had been quickly removed when I spoke of the arrival of the cattle.

Santa-ta said then:

"If the cattle are for my people why can I not have them here, as well as at the fort?"

I told him certainly he could have his share delivered there; but that the remainder of the cattle would have to be taken to the Comanches, and that I would ride over the river and bring the cattle down to the other bank, when we would divide them, and he could send his young men over to drive his share across, while we camped there, with the remainder, for the night.

Then I smiled sweetly, shook hands with One-Eye, and complimented him upon the joke he had played on me, and received back my rifle and revolvers, when I started to go after the cattle,

pidly, and caused me to think over what was best to be done.

I knew I had to "fight it out on that line if it took all the summer," no matter what the odds might be against me, and a good "buffalo wallow" would be the place to fortify myself in; yet I kept urging on my mule to get near the fort as possible, so that, when it came to the worst, my firing would be heard, and bring my comrades to my relief.

The Indians were now getting pretty close, and would now and then send a bullet after me to remind me that they were coming to the ball, but mule was long-winded, and held out bravely, although he had long-winded Indian horses upon his track.

At last I came to the ridge dividing Pawnee Fork and Ash Creeks, and from this point could just see the fort, still five miles away.

The sun was nearly down, and in a few moments more I knew I should see the flag lowered and hear the evening gun; but yet, "zip," "zip," "zip" would fall a bullet near me, until I concluded to return the compliment, although the distance was too great for crack shooting.

Knowing that their only hope was to catch me before succor came from the fort, and that they dare not follow me across Pawnee Fork, two miles from the post, they urged their horses to their utmost speed, and soon crept up to within two hundred yards of me, and I made up my mind to fight from under the bridge that crossed Pawnee Fork creek, when all of a sudden from around a bend of the creek came a mule-team filled with soldiers, who, discovering the Indians after me, opened fire, and at once my race for life stopped, for my pursuers wheeled off into a hollow and were soon lost to sight.

I found that the welcome "soldier boys" had been down to the lower crossing of Pawnee Fork after the bodies of three men, who had been killed that morning by Santana and his band.

On arriving at the fort I reported to the commanding officer, and learned that the Indians had attacked a rancho on the old Santa Fe crossing of Pawnee Fork, and had killed three men, and driven off the stock, after which they came in sight of the fort and brandished their arms in a threatening way, until, discovering that the boys were ready for a brush, they rode away.

The Indians had evidently planned this work out, for the night before Santana had been to the fort and traded off his carriage, thinking, probably, it would not be exactly the thing in which to go on the western trail.

At that time we had no telegraph lines, and yet it was important to get word to General Sheridan, whose headquarters were then at Fort Hays, distant sixty miles from Larned, and when I arrived old Dick Curtis was preparing to start on the perilous duty of carrying dispatches, through a country swarming with hostile Indians.

The night was coming on dark, and there being no road to Fort Hays, some one had to go who knew the country, and Dick was that man, but he was getting too old for a sixty mile ride alone on a rainy night, and Denver Jim, a good scout and a brave man, volunteered to go, but was not certain that he knew the country well enough, and thus matters stood when I arrived. It did not take me long to see that the commanding officer had his eye on me for the job, for he asked if I thought a man well mounted could ride it in a night?

I told him yes, and volunteered for the work if Denver Jim would go with me.

He said he would not ask it of me after my sixty mile trip, and my hard ride for life, but I told him that I would be ready in an hour, and off I started to work the sutler store, and then hunt up something to eat.

Mounted upon good mules we started upon our trip, leaving the fort at ten o'clock, and without particular adventure we reached General Sheridan's headquarters at seven o'clock the morning following.

Delivering the dispatches to Colonel Moore, of the general's staff, and telling him where we could be found, we went over to my old home, Hays City, situated about a mile from the fort.

Leaving our tired mules at Anderson's livery stable, to be well taken care of, we crossed the street to the Gridiron, where we met my old friend, Hank Fields, who invited us to "look into a damp glass," which, after our long ride, we of course did, and soon found ourselves a pair of lions, for our trip had become noised abroad.

After a good breakfast at the "J. D. Perry House," we lay down for a sleep, and at one o'clock an orderly came over to the hotel and said:

"General Sheridan wishes to see the scout, Cody."

I at once sought the general's quarters, and told him all I knew about the Indian rising, and then he asked me all about the Beaver Creek and Republican River country, and said that there was one of the finest cavalry regiments in the army on its way from the States, and he intended to order it into that country after the Dog Soldier Sioux, who had been committing a great many depredations of late, and he also said he wanted a guide for the command and that I had been recommended as the man to fill that position.

I thanked the general for the honor done me, and he went on to say that some one had to go with dispatches to Fort Larned that night. I of course volunteered for the work, and it was settled, that at dark, in company with Denver Jim, I should start.

Without accident we arrived at *revellie* the next morning, and found all excitement, for the Indians had been attacking trains on the Santa Fe trail, and had killed a number of haymakers in sight of the fort.

Having to return again to Fort Hays as soon as it was dark, and this time alone, Captain Nolan kindly loaned me a splendid horse, for a mule is always braying when alone; and as soon as it was dark, mounted and started upon my sixty mile ride.

Nothing of importance happened until nearing Walnut Creek, my horse suddenly attempted to whinny, and I knew danger was around.

Keeping steadily on I suddenly found myself in a band of Indian ponies, and at once I began backing out, when I heard the guard cry out. I made no reply and was hurrying away, when he gave a fearful war-whoop, which was answered in twenty different directions.

But no sooner did I clear one herd of horses than I would run into another, and this proved that there were a large number of Indians encamped upon the creek.

As a better proof that I was in a tight place I suddenly ran right upon three dismounted Indians, who threw themselves flat on the ground and commenced firing at me, which maneuver caused me to feel that I had business calling me elsewhere about that time.

Wheeling to the right about I darted off and soon heard mounted warriors in hot pursuit,

and I knew that my only safety lay in the speed and bottom of my horse, who soon proved, to my satisfaction, that he was leaving my enemies far behind.

Just as I was beginning to feel secure my horse stepped into a hole and down he went, and I found myself lying on the ground.

My horse at once sprung to his feet, unhurt, and started to run, leaving me dismounted on the prairie with a band of Indians close upon me; but I had "been there before," and was prepared for just such a fall as I had, as I invariably tie one end of my lariat to the bridle-bit and the other to my belt, sticking the coil also in my belt. When my horse got to the end of the rope he found he had just one hundred and ninety pounds to drag with his mouth, and so gave up the job and found his passenger on his back again in short order, instead of having some Indian squaw making a water-fall of my scalp.

Just as I was once more in the saddle "zip," "zip," the bullets fell around me, encouraging me immensely in getting away from there at a lively pace.

As soon as I again got out of sight of the Indians, over a ridge in the prairie, I immediately turned short off to the left in the direction of Fort Larned, which course I kept until the Indians had wholly lost me in the darkness, when I again turned to the right, taking a westerly course parallel with the creek, which direction I followed for several miles, when I once more pursued my way northward and struck the creek bottom for fear of running into another nest of the red hornets.

Then there came the difficulty of finding a crossing, for, though the water was not deep, the banks were steep and high; but fortunately I struck a buffalo trail, just what I was in search of, and quietly crossing the stream struck out across the bottom in the direction of the hills, feeling quite relieved at my escape, and I allowed my horse to rest for the long ride yet before him.

At this moment it occurred to me that I had a "life preserver" in my pocket that contained some of "Tappan's best," but of course I didn't work any of it—kept it for fear of a snake bite, just as any plainsman would have done, or you either, my masculine reader.

Just before daybreak I reached the Smoky Hill River, and I suddenly heard a stamping and running that nearly scared me to death; but before I died of fright I discovered the cause of the row was a passing herd of buffalo, so I was happy once more.

Letting my horse rest and giving him a drink of water from the stream, I crossed the Smoky Hill and once more set out for Fort Hays, arriving at my destination just as the morning gun summoned the "boys in blue" to roll-call.

This made three nights in succession I had passed in the saddle, and you can wager, without fear of losing, that I was a tired man, and that my horse was also fagged out, and when daylight came I hardly recognized him after his night's trip, for no one but a quartermaster geologist would have called him a horse.

I turned him over to a quartermaster, to be sent back to his owner; but, whether he ever got back to his kind master, or was "covered with an affidavit," I have never been able to learn, as I was, a few days after, sent into the Beaver Creek and Republican River country as guide and scout for the "gallant Fifth Cavalry," as fine a regiment of officers and men as any army can boast of.

Love in a Maze:

OR,
THE DEBUTANTE'S DISENCHANTMENT.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

AUTHOR OF "ALIDA BARRETT, THE SEWING-GIRL," "MADELINE'S MARRIAGE," ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

A SURPRISE AND A SHOCK.

A NUMBER of enthusiastic connoisseurs in art were assembled at the house of Herbert St. Clare, and seldom had a party been so keenly enjoyed by the invited guests. The host did his best to entertain his friends, and his powers had not diminished since the time when he had been the lion of fashionable circles. Olive, in contributing her share to the general feast of music, forgot to feel that she had entered too soon the circle from which she had fancied her poverty excluded her forever. She caught herself, indeed, now and then, wondering at her new position, and feeling that she was tasting of forbidden joys. But the cordial kindness with which she was greeted by all her former acquaintances was soothing and delightful to her.

There was no formality or dullness in that select circle. They had come for the enjoyment of music, and to hear one or two artists lately arrived from Italy, who would not have given their performance at any other private house in the city. Each guest, therefore, felt that he or she was admitted to a rare and enviable privilege. And there was no display of refreshments to please those who care for eating and drinking. A table at one end of the third parlor was set out with wines, light punch, lemonade, sandwiches and cake, and any who chose might help themselves in the intervals of song and conversation.

Olive remained near Ruhama, the first part of the evening. She saw the light of pleasure in her friend's eyes, and sympathized in her feelings. Mrs. Marsh was dressed in black silk, with a chemise and collar of point lace in the square-cut front, a becoming though simple costume. Her overskirt was richly trimmed with Brussels lace; her hair was wholly without ornament.

When the music ceased, she was surrounded by friends; but Wyndham Blount, who was present, came not near her, after the first greeting. He was very attentive to Miss Weston. He talked to her of the musical treat they had enjoyed, and discussed the merits of the professional vocalists, and the public sensation that had already created. Wyndham had little scientific knowledge of the art, and was glad to learn the opinion of a lady whose taste was so well known. Her approbation—so enthusiastic as it was—convinced him he had a right to be delighted.

Olive ventured at length to ask if he had heard any news of her former pupil, Miss Sterne.

He had heard nothing since she left New York so suddenly. She had been hurried away, he did not doubt, by the persons who had her in charge, to avoid his claims on her. "Though I should not have insisted on these," he added. "If the young girl were bent on a professional career, I should have interfered no further than to urge her to consent to a course of instruction likely to develop her powers, and fit her for the place she aimed to attain."

"You think she had great talent?" asked Olive.

"Nay; I should ask your opinion on that subject, as you had full opportunity of judging. You know how little I am qualified."

"I thought," Olive replied, "that she might, some time or other, realize her dream of eminent fame. She had a fresh and charming voice, though not yet brought out to the power it might have reached, by long and laborious practice. She was too impatient for the hard work necessary, and disposed to slur it over, if not restrained."

"Your judgment agrees with that of the manager, with whom I talked the day after I heard her at the opera. He said she was imperfect in the instruction she had received, and that her voice lacked volume; years, perhaps, of the best and most careful training would be necessary before she could command a high position. I would have sent her to Paris, if she had returned to me."

"And you think those in whose care she has placed herself, will not do her justice?"

"Their aim is solely to make money; and they have no object in giving her better knowledge. Rashleigh, her uncle, is the man who claims her fortune for his son; and he will be governed entirely by his own interest."

"Poor girl! he will prevent her return to her real friends!"

"I fear he will; he is capable of any wickedness, in his eagerness to obtain money. He would hide her, or carry her among the Indians, sooner than permit her to stand in the way of his securing the property that belongs to her."

"You have no clue to her place of residence?"

"Only a promise from a worthy, but poor old dame—Mrs. Brill, her late aunt's friend—that she will inform me when she learns whither Elodie has been taken. I have convinced the old lady that I am no tyrant of a guardian, but the young lady's well-meaning friend. As soon as I can, I will lay my reasonable proposition before her; and when she finds I am not disposed to crush her ambitious hopes, I think she will agree to my plans."

"Is it Miss Sterne you are speaking about?" asked his sister, who came up at that moment. "I never want to hear her name again. Don't you think, Olive, that my brother is fully absolved from his charge of such a willful little traitress?"

"If he can at any time do her good, or save her from evil, by his interference, he is bound to do it," returned Olive, gravely.

"But not to torment himself to hunt her up again! For my part, I was glad when she took herself off, to pursue her visions of fame and fortune."

Before Olive could reply, her attention was arrested. What she saw caused a crimson flush to mount to her very forehead. It was so painful a betrayal of emotion, that she turned away, and stooped to pick up her handkerchief, having purposely let it slide from her lap.

"Ah, there is Mr. Hamilton!" exclaimed the hostess, turning to greet the new-comer. "Better late than never! though he has missed the best songs."

The young man bowed, as he took Mrs. St. Clare's offered hand, and smiled at her reproaches.

"You have lost the Signora—and the Signor B—," she said, "and that is your punishment. They have just left us."

Olive had recovered her self-possession when she received the greeting of Claude, and his expression of pleasure that she had been persuaded to come.

"You have too long immured yourself," he added in a whisper, "and I have seen that your health was suffering."

There was unwonted tenderness in his tone; and no friend of the girl's would have had reason to complain of the lack of color in her cheeks. He saw the bloom he had missed, and was pleased, as his looks showed. Olive met that look for an instant, and her eyes drooped before it.

"I am a fool!" she mentally exclaimed. "Why can I not meet him as a friend, like Mr. Blount?"

When she looked up, she saw Claude in earnest conversation with Ruhama Marsh. They began to promenade, to the slow music just then coming in the extension parlor. Wyndham offered his arm, and Olive took it, joining in the procession. They had taken the second turn, when, as they approached one of the French windows in the front drawing-room, Olive suddenly stood still, growing very pale, with her eyes staring in one direction.

"What is the matter, Miss Weston?" exclaimed Wyndham. "You are ill; take a seat. I will bring you some wine."

But the girl only raised her finger, and pointed to the window.

"Did you not see it?" she asked, in a faint voice.

"See what? Nothing is there!"

"Yes—the face—the face between the curtains! It is gone now."

Wyndham led her up close to the window.

"I see that one of the blinds has been blown back," he said. "Did you see a face?"

"Yes, just there. A man was looking in."

She was trembling violently.

"Some loafer from the street. But it was impudent of him to come in at the gate, and cross the lawn over the flower-beds. Perhaps a footman from one of the carriages."

"No, it was no servant."

"Sit here, and I will go to see."

The young man left her, and passed out of the door, through the company into the hall, and out at the front door.

But Olive arose quickly the instant he had left her, passing behind the voluminous draperies of the window, which she drew close together, so as to screen her from observation. She then unfastened the window, pushed it open, and stepped out.

She stood on a narrow balcony, only two feet from the ground. The air was warm and balmy. She leaned over the trelliswork and peered into the foliage that shaded the front of the house.

She thought she saw the figure of a man, but could not tell. Instantly her resolution was taken. By that time Wyndham had about gained the front door.

Stepping on a low, wooden bench, she swung herself over the light railing and stepped on the ground. The turf was dry and soft as a carpet. She stole after the retreating form which she fancied she had seen.

The thick shrubbery concealed her from the view of any one at the front door. And the wide lawn extended some distance to the railing that divided it from the street. In that locality, the houses were scattered, and there was none adjoining St. Clare's on either side.

The girl had a motive strong enough to overcome any fear she might have entertained. Hearing a rustle among the leaves, she followed quickly. The angle of the house was turned, and the faint moonlight fell upon the green, free from the intercepting tracery of foliage. Here, indeed, the figure of a man might be dimly discerned. He stood still;

he seemed to have just caught a glimpse of his pursuer.

Olive came near enough to touch his arm, but she did not. She was trying to gather courage to speak.

"Is it Ruhama?" asked a low voice.

"No, but it is Ruhama's friend," she replied, firmly. "I am not mistaken. I am so glad I have found you."

"Why are you glad?" the deep tone responded.

"Because I have an opportunity to show you how unlike yourself you are, thus hovering in concealment—"

"And playing the spy! Speak out; do not spare me."

"I hope there is no need. Will you come in?"

"I am not an invited guest," the man remarked, in a bitter tone.

"But a most welcome one. Give me your arm, General Marsh, and let us go in together."

"No, I will not."

"You have just returned home?"

"I came two hours after you had gone. I was surprised to find my wife had gone to a party, and of all houses to this one. But all this does not interest you, Miss Weston."

"Indeed it does. I have been your wife's guest for some time."

"So the housekeeper told me."

"And to me your wife confided the cause of your leaving her."

"It is made public, then?"

"No, General; not a soul knows of it but myself. Ruhama said very little even to me, before last night, much as she has suffered. She has been very unhappy."

"It is likely! she has sought her usual solace."

"This is the first time she has spent an evening from home since you left her," cried the girl, eager to vindicate her friend. "Come this way, General Marsh; they cannot see us from the front. I know that Ruhama is wretched on account of this misunderstanding; and I implore you to put an end to it."

"How did you know I was here?" demanded the husband.

"I saw your face at the window. I knew you at once!"

"Then you saw me in a situation I am ashamed to have been caught in!" moaned the unhappy man. "All the company know I have been spying, I suppose!"

"Not one, I hope and believe!" cried Olive.

"Mr. Blount was with me, and when I told him I had seen a man's face—for he asked what startled me so—he came to the door to reconnoiter. He must have gone in again. They will miss me presently; they will know I have come out, for I had to leave the window open. I must go back directly. Oh, General Marsh, how can you be unkind to such a wife!"

"I should not have followed her to any house but this!"

"Ruhama loves you with all her heart."

"I cannot believe it!"

"She does," she told me she did! She wept bitter tears over your lost confidence! You have wronged her; she never gave you cause for suspicion!"

"You say this, Miss Weston, in pity for me?"

"I say it because it is the truth! Come in with me, and see how delighted she will be! She has only waited to learn where you were to follow you, or write to you."

"She would have followed me?"

"You could not have escaped her—had she known where to find you."

"She said to me something very different!"

"She was stung and outraged by unjust suspicion. General Marsh, you did wrong to suspect her."

The wretched man smote his forehead with his hand.

"To-night," continued Olive, "she has not once spoken with Mr. Blount. He has been close to me nearly all the evening. It is too ridiculous, jealousy of him. If he cares for any one it is for that little ward of his, who ran away some months since, and came out at the opera, and vanished again. I heard him talking of her. Oh, General Marsh, it is hard to speak to you in this manner, to you who are so much my superior; and you may think me very forward; but I must try to undeceive you! Pray forgive me!"

"Miss Weston you have my respect—my gratitude—"

"And you will come in with me?"

"No, no, I dare not! I cannot meet her yet, nor with others looking on!"

"Then go home and let her find you there. I will bring her presently."

"She is angry with me; I could not bear harsh words from her. You know not what a state my mind is in! I feel as if I should go mad!"

"Go—go—and wait for us! We will follow you directly! I dare not stay!"

And the girl turned and fled hastily back. She heard voices at the front door, and saw that the window was closed by which she had come out. There was no other way but to brave a shower of questions.

She walked up the steps composedly, and answered to those who asked where she had been, that she had been taking a mouthful of fresh air at the end of the balcony. It was so warm in the rooms, and so pleasant out there. Now she felt refreshed. As she passed in, Ruhama caught her arm.

"Were you faint, dear friend?" she asked.

"Not faint—but I feel better now! Let us go home."

She grasped her friend's hand with a significant pressure. Ruhama led her at once to the dressing-room.

"What have you to tell me?" she asked.

"He was here a few moments since; I saw and spoke with him. We shall find him at your house."

"My husband?"

"Not a word now. I will tell you all as we go."

The two ladies came out into the hall, and took leave of their hostess. Mr. Wyatt drew Ruhama's arm within his own, and Wyndham led Olive down the steps.

"Did you see any one?" he whispered. "I know you were outside. I missed you when I went back into the rooms."

"Do not question me, Mr. Blount," replied the girl, "for I must not repeat anything I heard. I fancied I recognized—an old acquaintance, and went out to get an explanation of conduct that appeared singular. I only found that it was all right; it was no business of mine. Did any one wonder at my absence?"

"Not till the moment you came back. I was afraid, Olive, of an attack on you by that reprobate brother of Mrs. Stanley's. He is furious, I understand, at the probability that the court will soon reinstate you in your rights as the heiress."

"It was not he; Mr. Lumley has never spoken to me since I left that house."

"I am glad of that. You must call on me if you need a friend, Olive."

They were at the carriage, and Ruhama was waiting. Wyndham helped both ladies in, and Tom Wyatt said he would see them home. In spite of their remonstrances, he sprang upon the box beside the coachman.

Olive told her friend all! Ruhama flung her arms round her, and embraced her with tears of joy.

"You are indeed a true friend!" she cried. "And you think we shall find him at home?"

"I trust so. At any rate he is in New York, and as penitent for his cruel jealousy as we could expect a husband to be. Don't be agitated, dear; it will all be well! You have nothing to fear!"

"I owe it to you, Olive!"

Both hurried into the house, and the young wife eagerly questioned the servants; but no one had arrived within two hours. The General had come, early in the evening, and had seen the housekeeper; he had left orders, no doubt, with her, for they talked together in the library; no one else had seen him but the butler, and he only for a moment. The housekeeper was sent for, and came. She only stated that her master had seemed in a hurry; had made some excuse—she did not remember what—for not having written before his unexpected return; had asked who was staying at the house, and where the mistress had gone; and had said he might see her before she came home. The dame thought he had certainly gone to fetch both the ladies home.

When the servants had retired Ruhama threw herself into a chair in the library, and dashed the indignant tears from her eyes.

"Is it not too cruel?" she cried, "thus to subject me to the curious comments of my domestics! They will all be wondering what is the matter, and spreading the news of some disagreement, exaggerating what they do not understand! This is the worst of all!"

"They will not suspect that anything is wrong," said Olive. "They understand that we saw him at Mr. St. Clare's, that he was hurried, and expected to join us at home. I took care to say this to the butler. If he walked he may be here yet. At the worst you will see him to-morrow."

"And the whole household will know he was in town and did not come home!" wailed the deserted wife.

"Ruhama, you have done nothing amiss, and have nothing to fear. It is not for you to shrink and tremble at phantoms. Whenever the General returns you will receive him as a true wife should, and not trouble yourself at the carplings of indifferent people."

"What should I do without you, Olive?" murmured the wife, as she returned her embrace.

"Now I will say good-night," said Olive, "and I advise you to retire to your room, and to bed—for you are tired. Throw off the care that would keep you from sleep."

"Ah, child! If you were married you would not give such counsel! I will wait here half an hour."

"Then I will stay with you."

"No, I would rather you

my name—and I am proud of it! I love my husband! If the laws offered me release by any crime of his, I would not take it! I would cling to him! Oh, what have I done to be thus shamed and humbled?"

"I beseech you, forgive me," pleaded the offender.

"Leave me, Mr. Wyatt! You have given me a great shock! You have shown me the danger of trusting one I esteemed a friend! You can do me no other service or favor than to leave me!"

"Only say you pardon me!"

"Your very presence here is a peril and a reproach to me! Why will you not go? Will you force me to call the servants?"

Wyatt had moved toward the door; he turned quickly and rushed to her.

"I am gone," he said, "and will not again offend your sight. Only say you forgive me; give me your hand in token of pardon. If you only know how miserable I am!"

Ruhama's hand was outstretched; it may have been to enforce his departure. But he snatched it, and pressed it passionately to his lips.

"Now, farewell!" he gasped, in a voice hoarse with feelings that almost suffocated him.

Ruhama snatched her hand away and stepped back. As she did so, she noticed that the door of the library nearest the front, which had been ajar, was pushed gently open, while a rush of cold air came in, evidently from the outside door of the mansion, opened likewise.

Tom Wyatt saw her eyes fixed, and instinctively turned. A figure stood in the doorway; but before he could recognize it, or speak, it had vanished. In a second the house door was closed with some violence, as if some one had gone out.

Ruhama stood transfixed with horror. "It was Arthur!" she cried. "Quick, go after him; bring him back!"

Wyatt obeyed her. He was outside the front door in an instant; but he could see no one. The street was solitary. He ran to the corner, to the one on the other side, but not a human being could be seen. Then he went again into the house to report his want of success.

Ruhama had staggered to the bell and rung it, for she felt herself growing deathly faint. The housekeeper, who was up, ran in, and found her mistress on the floor, but not quite insensible. As Mr. Wyatt entered she bade him fetch some cold water from the dining-room. He brought it, and then, with a muttered, imperfect explanation that Mrs. Marsh had been alarmed by the entrance of some stranger, who had retreated, he turned away and left the house.

Olive, who had not yet taken off her dress, and had her door open, heard the commotion, and came rapidly down-stairs. She thought the General had returned. The housekeeper told her Mrs. Marsh had had a fright, and was near fainting, but was better now, and would be able in a few minutes to go to her own room.

"You had better leave her to me," said Olive, going up to her friend, and clasping her arms round her. "I will take her to her room. You may put out the lights."

She led Ruhama tenderly up the stairs and into her own sumptuous apartments. She placed her upon the couch, and supported her in her arms. She would not ask a question till she had regained composure.

Ruhama sat up and looked around her.

"Did you know," she whispered, "that my husband has been here? He has been—and he is gone. This time it is forever!"

"Oh, no! no!"

"An evil fate has pursued me! A fate I have not deserved. Mr. Wyatt followed us in, and after you left me, he came out from where he was hid."

"Hid!"

"He spoke wild and wicked words! He insulted me! I bade him go, but he would have my hand in token of my forgiveness. Just then, my husband—he must have entered with a night-gear—stood in the doorway! He rushed out again—out into the street! He heard—he saw only enough to make him believe me unfaithful and treacherous! Olive, I shall never see him again!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEBUTANTE DISCHANCED.

The scene was a country house near one of the salt marshes of New Jersey, not far from the seacoast.

It was the close of a day in spring. The rosy sunset touched the tips of a few scattered trees, and the reeds that covered acres of the soil, and the gable end of a rude, weather-beaten wooden dwelling.

The interior of the house was less inviting. A room covered with a rag carpet and furnished with settees and chairs—a few of them cushioned with pillows of red marine cloth, admitted the purple light through unshuttered windows. There was a fire of sticks in the wide chimney, and a door stood open, revealing an interior chamber, that served as a bedroom. By one of the windows stood a large easy-chair of red stuff, luxuriously cushioned; and in it reclined the wasted form of a young girl.

An elderly lady was crossing the room bearing a tray, which she was about to deposit on a stand close to the invalid's chair.

"You must eat," she said, coaxingly; "you must gain strength as rapidly as possible."

"Yes, I will eat," the young girl answered. "My appetite has come back since you promised to take me to the city. When shall we leave this place?"

She did full justice, while speaking, to the delicate viands before her.

"When? Oh, very soon, I hope," was the response of the elder.

"To-morrow?"

"Hardly so soon; you are not strong, remember, Helene; you might have a relapse, and that would be worse here than in Richmond, because there are no skillful physicians."

"I don't want them; I have been gaining strength without them. I only want to go to the city, and be at home again."

"You are impatient to leave me, Helene."

"I am very grateful to you, madame, for all your kindness," answered the girl. "But you know I have no voice since my illness, and we could not sing any more, even if we had engagements."

"Your voice will return when you are quite strong again."

"Maybe; I do not know. But I do not want to sing any more in concerts, or in such troupes as visit the provincial cities."

"You have had as much success, Helene, as a young vocalist could expect. You cannot equal the leading prima donnas of the world with a few months of training."

"I know that. I have learned to be aware of my defects, if I have learned nothing else. I have had mediocre success, as you say; and I am not satisfied. I would rather go back and submit myself to rules."

"You should not be discouraged by one trial, or by many. Such a position as you have aimed at cannot be attained without labor."

"True, and my efforts for the last months have done me harm rather than good. I am sensible of that."

"No harm, surely, Helene."

"Call me Elodie; that is my name."

"Mademoiselle Elodie."

"And you need not prefix a 'Mademoiselle'—I have dropped the French and Italian. I am content with plain Elodie Sterne, a willful schoolgirl, who has had her holiday and her heyday, and is willing now to complete her education in the most proper way."

She shook back her still luxuriant flossy curls, as she pushed the stand and tray from her, having made a hearty supper.

The madame rung the little bell on the table, and the things were removed by the uncouth attendant who was the only servant on the premises.

"The day after to-morrow we start, do we? I understood you to say so?"

"I did not say. Only that you were not strong enough to go to-morrow, and the monsieur, your uncle, has not yet returned."

"What difference will that make?" cried Elodie, drawing herself up in the chair, her eyes flashing. "He has no right to control me!"

"Not to control, of course; but—"

"Why should we wait for his return? We are not far from the city! Ten—twenty miles—how far?"

"Somewhere about that."

"And the railroad, I know, passes within a couple of miles. We were set down at a station, and came that distance in a carriage."

"Ah, you remember that, dear?"

"I remember it well, though I was so weak from the fever. And I heard you ask the distance from the city. I know these are the salt marshes, for I have been over them; and I know that some large New Jersey towns lie back—that way," pointing in one direction; "while the sea is yonder. We were not to stop here long; there are no accommodations for us."

"True, my dear; and no piano—nor music."

"We had no need of them, when I could not sit up," remarked the young girl, forgetful that Madame Leona was an artist, too, and would find the time hang heavily without opportunity of practicing. "Now I am well again. We will have the packing finished to-morrow, and set out early the next day."

"Where will you stop in the city?" inquired the lady, after a pause.

"I will go first to auntie Brill's, and then send word to my guardian."

"Do you think he will receive you?"

"Why not? He promised aunt Letty to take care of me, and said I should look to him until I was of age."

"But you cast off his authority, child."

"That was when I thought I must earn my own living, and not be a burden to him. I repented the girl, a flush mounting to her face. "He thought me too young for that; and he wanted me back again, or he would not have sought me so diligently. Would he, think you, madame?"

"I do not know," mused the lady.

"Madame Leona!" the girl suddenly exclaimed, sitting up straight—"did not a letter come from auntie Brill while we were in Richmond?"

"I do not know of any."

"But I am sure one must have come. I had written to her, and told her to write. There must have been a letter. Will you ask for it?"

"You told me to do that weeks ago; and I did ask."

"Was there none?"

"No; no letters at all had been received."

"But I know there was one from auntie Brill! I know she has written! Madame, I will tell you what became of that letter: Mr. Rashleigh has kept it!"

The young lady had risen to her feet, and held herself steady by the arms of the chair. "Nonsense, child! How do you startle one! Sit down; you are too weak to stand."

"I am not too weak! See, I can walk!"

She made several steps forward, waving back the assistance her companion offered. Then she went back to her chair.

"I know Mr. Rashleigh intercepted that letter."

"Child, you wrong your uncle—"

"Don't call him my uncle! He was only my aunt Letty's husband, who always treated her ill. I have never called him uncle! I was a boarder in his house; he had the money every week for my board; I owe him nothing!"

"He has been a faithful agent in our tour—Helene—Elodie, I mean."

"Because it was his interest. We agreed to give him a heavy share of the profits. Now that is at an end. We want his services no longer. I shall not sing any more at present. We will not have his company back to New York. Have you settled with him for good?"

"Settled? Of course. We never had any account together. The profits were always divided after each concert; and our expenses paid as we went."

"How much money is there left?"

"For our share?"

"Certainly."

"I am sorry to say, very little. Your illness drained the fund sadly; and there was the doctor's bill in Richmond."

"Enough to take us to the city?"

"About enough. But, Elodie, something is still due to me. I have lost much time—waiting on you, these many weeks; and if you are not going to sing in public, it is but fair that my losses should be made good."

"I will take care of that," said the girl.

"Every cent shall be paid to you."

"How are you to pay my claims, if you have no money?"

"I will ask my guardian to advance it out of the installments due to me. Or, if I cannot draw on my property, he will lend it to me."

"Suppose he cannot, or will not, do either the one or the other?"

"Then I will go to work again, and never rest till I have repaid you!"

"Suppose your voice does not return?"

"You said it would, not half an hour since."

"But it may not. I have known singers lose their voice from such an illness as you have had, and never recover it."

Elodie grew pale.

"That would be a great misfortune," she said. "Then I shall have to teach music. I have had some experience. I am as able to teach as Miss Weston was, when she took a class; and I play as well as she did, when I went to her for lessons. Do not fear, madame, but that I will pay you, sooner or later, with interest, too. Only help me to get away from here. One thing is certain: you can get nothing from Mr. Rashleigh."

"I mean to do so," muttered Leona, "and that before I leave this house."

Her words were not audible to the girl, who was lying back in her chair, drowsily closing her eyes.

"You had better go to bed now," the dame suggested.

"Thanks; I will! I am sorry my maid is not here to undress me; it is hardly fit work for you, madame."

"I have done it these four weeks, and never complained," observed Leona, rather sullenly, as she laid out the night-clothes for her charge.

When Elodie had retired, and the doors were closed for the night, the madame went out on the long veranda that overlooked the marshy expanse seaward.

The moon was struggling through scattered clouds, and poured a sickly light on the dreary waste, over whose distant edges a thick mist had arisen. The house was still as death.

On the other side was the road, a rough, seldom used highway; and a wide stretch of flat country, partially cultivated, extended beyond.

Madame stood leaning on a low railing that overlooked the stone terrace protecting the frame building from the marshy land, so subject to inundations that the water would also have undermined the house. While wrapped in meditation by no means agreeable, she heard the quick tramp of a horse on the road.

She moved swiftly along the veranda, entered the open hall door and passed through, emerging on the front piazza, which also extended across the entire width of the house.

She saw a man coming down the road. He halted at the little gate, threw the bridge over a post, and came in. Madame Leona made a gesture enjoining caution as he approached. With almost noiseless steps he came to her side.

"What news?" he whispered.

"Everything goes on as you expected; but I have had a deal of trouble with her."

"She is not worse again?"

"No; she is fast gaining strength. But she has a mind of her own; you know that, Mr. Rashleigh; and you must know, too, that I cannot control her. I must put an end to this; I will go to-morrow."

"You must not leave her just now; she has confidence in you. She suspects nothing?"

"No; how could she? I have waited on her patiently; and cooked every meal; it is new work for me."

"Your work is nearly finished. We shall be ready to leave here by the end of the week."

"Your niece says she will go the day after to-morrow."

"That is too soon. I cannot have the others here before Saturday or Friday evening. We shall have the girl married in the morning, and set out at once."

"Do you expect to get her consent so soon? I will undertake it."

"You think she cannot be compelled, if not persuaded?"

"I could do neither; nor will I attempt it. She has the strongest will of any girl I ever knew. She has made up her mind now to go back to her guardian."

"She shall not leave this house but as a married woman—as the wife of my son. I shall have him brought to E—to-morrow, with the priest and the hospital attendant; on Friday night we will be here. The marriage can be either that night or the next morning. You will stay with her till then?"

"I will stay and do what I can. But I will not undertake to bend her will, nor to force her to anything she does not like."

"Leave that to me," said the man, with a low, chuckling laugh. "If she will not yield I have drugs that will paralyze both her will and her strength. You may give her something in a cup of tea that will put down resistance."

"I do not like it," returned Leona. "But for what you will pay me I would go at once."

"True; you want your slice of the cake; you will be lucky to have that at once; while I must do some fighting yet with the lawyers for the fortune. Anyhow, it is better than the music business."

It may be as well to mention here that the tour of concert giving had by no means fulfilled the expectations of Rashleigh, though it had yielded sufficient for support and traveling expenses. They had visited many of the Southern cities—going as far as Charleston. Elodie's health had failed; she became petulant and unmanageable; and then Rashleigh conceived the idea of bringing her North, forcing her into a marriage with his imbecile son, and then securing the property, which could not be withheld when he, Rashleigh, should represent the rights of both claimants.

It was with a view to this consummation of his plans that he had taken this lonely house on the marsh for a month, hoping to accomplish his designs here. The presence of Leona was necessary, as a respectable matron, known to have been trusted by the girl, and to have been long her companion.

"What will be the effect of the drug you wish me to administer?" she asked, after a pause. "Is it dangerous to life?"

"No; certainly not. It will confuse her perceptions, filling her with pleasant fancies, and for the time paralyzing her will. Then she will fall into a profound sleep and waken perfectly well."

"Will she be conscious while the ceremony is going on?"

"Partially; but she will not think of resistance. The effect will be like that of my potions, in the days before I cured myself of drinking." Again a low laugh.

"Hush; what was that noise? Some one may overhear you."

"I heard nothing but the water-rats scampering over the stones. There—they are splashing in the marsh."

Madame Leona declared her intention of retiring to rest; and, as she turned to go, asked if she should inform Miss Sterne in the morning of her uncle's return.

"It will be better not," he replied. "I shall be off early, to complete my arrangements for having my son brought from the hospital. We shall all come together Friday evening. Keep her quiet; she must know nothing. I will have no quarreling about the matter."

"It is best so."

"We shall put her in a happy state with the medicine in her tea, and have the courtship and the wedding hurried up and all over before she wakes out of the sleep. On further reflection, we will have it on Friday night; then she can have the night for rest; and need know nothing of the arrival of her bridegroom till next day. I depend on you to keep her here till then."

"I think I can do that; but I will do no more. Catherine must give her the drugged tea. And I must receive the money you promised immediately afterward."

This was agreed on, and the conspirators separated.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 281.)

A Shot for a Life.

BY GEORGE W. BROWNE.

"My God, Wald! they are upon us! Ride, for your life, ride!"

As Hardy shouted the words, he buried his heavy, clanking spurs deep into the sides of his noble horse, which, though already goaded to almost desperation, yet bounded forward at a rate of speed which I found my own high-mettled steed could barely accomplish.

Behind us, and close upon us, came at least a score of yelling savages, mounted upon their fleet-footed Indian ponies. They had surprised us in our camp that day, and, as our only chance of escape, we had taken to our horses. Thus we were riding for dear life, with bullets and arrows whistling around our heads in close proximity.

As we dashed through the sparsely-grown timber, I felt a little in the rear of my companion; when suddenly a shot better directed than the rest struck my poor horse in the side, and for an instant I felt him tremble beneath me; then, with a spasmodic groan, he staggered forward, and fell headlong to the earth. With a quick movement, I succeeded in extricating my feet from the stirrups, and struck safely upon the ground.

The savages gave a loud shout of exultation as they saw my horse fall, and rushed upon me in a body.

Instinctively I looked for Max, and saw him riding for dear life, as if he had not missed me. But it was just as well, for he could not have saved me. Seeing there was no chance of escape, I clubbed my rifle, and, as the savages rushed upon me, felled the foremost at my feet. But as I could repeat the blow, I felt something strike me on the head, and then all was blank.

When I came to my senses again, the savages were all gone but two, in pursuit of Max, as I supposed. The stalwart warriors left in charge of me placed me on the back of a horse, where I was securely lashed; then commenced the tedious journey to their village.

It was sunset when we reached their village, and as we came in sight, all the old squaws and children set up a loud cry, and danced around in frenzied delight, at beholding a prisoner, as I supposed. I paid as little heed as possible, however, to their hooting and jeering, and took a hurried survey of the village, as pretty, sequestered a place as ever I saw. Upon one side, as if to protect it, rose a perpendicular bluff, many feet in height, and extending the whole length of the village. This was covered with a stunted growth of beeches. On the other side, and extending around it in nearly a circular form, was a piece of heavy timber. At the lower end could be heard the gurgling of a mountain brook, as it dashed along over its stony bottom. In the center of the clearing the savages had erected their wigwams, in the form of a half-circle. As I saw but a few able-bodied warriors in sight, I concluded they must be out on the war-path.

My captors took me into a wigwam near the center of the village; and after securely binding me, they all left, excepting one brawny warrior, that was to guard me.

But little sleep visited me in my lonely wigwam that night. My thoughts would wander back to my eastern home, and to fond parents anxiously awaiting my return. A return which, as things looked then, I should never make. Twice in the night I heard a commotion in the village without, and the hurried tramp of feet, as they rushed to and fro. As it lasted but a short time, I concluded it was the savages returning from their expedition. Perhaps they had Max a captive! Oh! how I prayed they had not!

At last day dawned, and as the first rays of the rising sun came into the wigwam, I was visited by several savages, who, as I judged, had come to take a look at their prisoner.

The sun was nearly two hours high when a stalwart, fierce-looking warrior came into the wigwam, and cutting the thoughts that bound my feet, motioned for me to rise. With some difficulty I managed to do so; and then he led me out of the wigwam.

The first sight that greeted my eyes, as I passed through the doorway, was a large crowd of both sexes—consisting of warriors, squaws, children and papooses—grouped about a stake driven firmly into the ground near the center of the village.

The moment this motley assemblage saw me, they all left the stake, and at once surrounding me, set up such a series of frightful yells that I have only to think of them now, to fancy they are still sounding in my ears like the orgies of demons.

All appeared to regard me as the victim on whom they were to vent their rage for the loss the tribe had sustained in their vindictive expedition against my countrymen. Even the children took deep interest in the hellish sport already begun, and laughed and clapped their little hands with savage delight, or glared upon me with eyes scarcely less fierce in expression than those of their older companions.

They commenced their personal inflictions, which their council had sentenced me to undergo, by pinching me, biting me, and striking me in the face and on the body with their hands, fists and sticks. I bore this with what patience I could, knowing that resistance was in vain. But, oh! how I longed for one moment of freedom, that I might strike a single blow in self-defense.

At last, concluding that their preliminary sport had lasted long enough, probably, they led me away to the stake.

Then they loosened my cords, stripped all of my upper garments from my lacerated body, and then, fastening the cord firmly around my wrists, with my hands behind me, they secured the end of it to the stake.

Encircling the stake, at the distance of several feet from it, was a pile of faggots; so that everything was in readiness for the last horrible proceeding, which was to pass me from time to eternity.

The savages formed themselves in a circle, so that all would get a view of their victim, and set up a series of demoniac yells, without any move to fire the combustibles.

When the savages had contemplated the scene a sufficient time, a burning brand was applied to the faggots. These combustibles, many of which were resinous pine, splintered fine and as dry as tinder, quickly ignited; and as the flames rose they spread away to the right and left along the encircling pile. This was the signal for a renewal of savage yells; but, unmindful of these now, I fixed my eyes upon the fire, and my thoughts upon that dread eternity to which I was fast hastening.

It was a beautiful day, and the sun shone brightly down through a clear, cloudless atmosphere; but it shone not for me, who had bidden a mental adieu to all I had ever seen or known, and was now preparing my spirit, by silent prayer, for its eternal flight.

Suddenly I was aroused from my meditations by the sharp crack of a rifle, and a bul-

let sped past me, just grazing my wrists, as it nearly severed the thong which bound me. And then, ringing out on the clear, morning air with startling distinctness, came the words: "Run, Wald! for your life, run!"

The voice came from the direction of the bluff; and I felt as if I had, at least, one friend left. This gave me hope. With a tug at my thigh, I finished what the bullet had begun; and then, leaping the burning faggots with a bound, I ran for the timber like a frightened deer.

The shot, and my attempt to escape, took the savages so completely by surprise, that I had got half-way to the timber, before they recovered from the shock. But even then, I should not have gotten away so easily, had it not been for the aid of my unseen friend. A party of warriors attempted to intercept me, and one stalwart savage leaped into the path ahead of me, brandishing aloft a gleaming tomahawk. But this daring act cost him his life. A bullet from an unerring rifle struck him in the forehead; and, with his war-whoop but half uttered, he fell dead in my very path. This checked the others for an instant, and allowed me to reach the cover of the timber, at the lower end of the bluff, without a scratch. A moment later, I reached the brook. Quickly stepping into the water, I ran up-stream for, perhaps

WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

Am I a woman's rights man? Yes,
I rather think I somehow guess
I'm heart and soul for what you call
Dear woman's rights. God bless them all!

If you can find an advocate
In this or any other State
Who is more earnest in the cause,
I'll sit me down and shout applause.

I think that they should have the right
To have their spirits ever light;
The right to be exceeding sweet;
The right to be both fair and neat.

I think they have the right to warn,
The right to never chide and scold;
The right to be forever dear,
The right to never shed a tear.

They should have all the rights to be
Tender in love and constancy;
The right to be forever young,
And hold (however loose) their tongue.

I think that they should have the right
To love their friends with all their might;
The right to keep from being jealous
Ourselves for fear of other fellows.

I think the right they should possess
To trust; to make a noble choice;
The right to share our joys and woes,
To mend our morals and our clothes.

I think they have the right to be
The angels that we love to see;
The right to mean just what they say
When it is in a kindly way.

I think they have the right to do
What is most blessed and most true,
For women's rights? Don't ask me that.
But for that cause just chalk my hat.

LEAVES

From an Actor's Life;

OR,

Recollections of Plays and Players.

BY GEO. L. Aiken.

XV.—*The Battle of Buena Vista—The Cast of Characters—The Rancheros and the American Army—Too Little Soldier and Too Much Uniform—The First Accident—Undeveloped Bumps—Ocky Johnson—His Peculiarities—The Joke that was Played upon Him—The Boston Museum.*

THERE are not many characters in the "Battle of Buena Vista," but they are all good; this is a feature that I would recommend to aspiring young play-writers. The principal character is a Yankee by the name of Ezekiah Hartshorn, which was personated by George Wyatt; he was as free-and-easy as all stage Yankees are made, and performed surprising feats of daring against incredible odds. He was accompanied by a friend and comrade, an Irishman, by way of a foil, called Barney O'Something, or other, who carried a small black bottle, and a large stick—the typical shillalah. He also was one of the "bravest of the brave." Who ever saw a shillalah was enough to put a troop of Mexican lancers to flight. This fight-and-whisky-loving son of the sod was represented by George Fox. He did not dream then that he was destined to rank among the first comedians of America. Then there was a heroic young officer, Captain Lincoln, personated by G. C. Howard, who protects a distressed Texan maiden with the romantic name of Zamora (acted by Mrs. Howard), and Sally Doolittle (Mrs. Stone), Ezekiah's sweetheart, who follows her Lincoln, and gets into difficulties by getting into a pair of trousers. Then there was bluff General Taylor, "Old Rough-and-Ready," done by Mr. Benson, in a rather exaggerated general's uniform; and a ferocious Mexican, Carales, fitly represented by O. Johnson. Some idea of the character of this latter individual may be formed from his first words when he rushes on the stage to the accompaniment of sheet-iron thunder and rosin-lightning, and loudly exclaims:

"Thunder, storm, and lightning are to me most welcome!"

Bill Sticker and some others appeared as blood-thirsty Rancheros, and Charley Fox and myself played the American Army; and as the regimental coats furnished us for that purpose were made for men, there was a great deal more uniform than army; and my hat was so large that I had to stuff something in the top to keep it from the bridge of my nose, and then it made me feel top-heavy.

Our duty consisted of following General Taylor wherever he went until the last scene, when we participated in the "Battle," and then we made ourselves hoarse yelling "Victory!"

Here I began that peculiarity of falling into any trap-door that was left conveniently open for me to experiment on, and that I have not broken my neck must be because I am reserved for some other fate, as they say that "a man who is born to be hanged will never be drowned."

An itinerant phrenologist felt of my bumps when I was acting with Wm. B. English, in Bangor, Me., and sold me a chart. He told me, after a most flattering description of what my bumps prognosticated, that I had two growing protuberances that puzzled him, as they were not sufficiently developed for him to pronounce upon, but that they "would come to something in time."

I thought at that time that they might be horns; but I am sorry to say, they are still undeveloped. It may be, however, that this much delayed development is the safeguard that has preserved me from the perils of stage traps, set rocks, and bridges in the theater, and shipwreck, and the horse cars, out of it.

A flight of stairs at the back of the stage led to the dressing-rooms below. To give the proper pitch to the stairs necessitated quite a large opening, two feet wide by some six feet long.

When the play was in action they had a custom of laying a set piece over this opening, as I discovered just as the "Battle" began, and the army was ordered to "charge." Charley Fox was on the other side of the stage and I rushed across the back of it to join him, stepped on the set-piece—cotton cloth stretched on a wooden frame and painted to represent a rock, or a door, or a window—and went through with a surprising velocity, leaving my soldier hat to mark the spot where I had disappeared.

Fortunately I alighted upon my feet about half way down the stairs and clutched the railing. I was only a little jarred but considerably astonished.

Charley Fox came rushing to my assistance, removed the set-piece, and fished me up, and was agreeably surprised to find that I was not injured, and the next moment we charged on the stage and discomfited Bill Sticker and the rest of the Rancheros with our accustomed vigor.

Octavian Johnson—Ocky, everybody called him—belonged to a class of actors peculiar to the drama in all ages; his ambition was greater than his merits. A better fellow never

lived. He was quiet and unassuming in private life, but nature had not given him those requisites so essential to the profession he had chosen. He had an ungainly figure, an unpleasantly marked face, and a bad voice. For the ruffians of the drama he did passably well—"Front Wood Robbers" they used to call them—but anything beyond that was beyond him.

He was the butt of the company and he was made the victim of a joke which he took seriously to heart. Sothern is very fond of his jokes, but George Wyatt was an inveterate practical joker. Indeed, actors are celebrated for the love of these pleasant practices upon their associates, and they are not particular in the selection of their victims.

Ocky's visage was an ill-favored one, and his eyes bulged from his head something after the style of a bullfrog, but he fancied himself an attractive object to a woman's eye. He used to parade the streets, dressed in light trousers, buff vest, a blue silk velvet cutaway coat, with bright buttons, and a white hat—in this costume to ogie the girls.

He considered this costume stunning, but I thought it decidedly *outré*. It attracted attention, however, and so his object was gained. A man's weakness is easily discovered. Ocky received a love-letter, written in gushing terms. This was too good a thing to be kept a secret, and he read it aloud for our delectation in the dressing-room. He was requested to answer it, and he did so. The correspondence became regular. He was requested to send a lock of his hair to his "fair unknown," and he complied, receiving a raven lock—a small one—in return. He was in raptures. Nothing now would content him but an interview with his incognito. He requested it in glowing words, and he was notified to be on the corner of Westminster and North Main street (the theater was on North Main street) at a certain hour, wearing a pink ribbon in the button-hole of his coat.

He was punctual to the tryst. The fair unknown did not come, to his great chagrin, and to his great surprise every male member of the company passed him at the corner with the interrogatory of: "Holloa, Ocky, what are you doing here?" and after worrying him for five minutes left him.

Ocky at last lost patience and gave up the hope of meeting his correspondent that day; he returned to Earl's Hotel, where he was boarding. That night Wyatt invited us all to an oyster supper, and after the bivalves were disposed of he began to rally Johnson upon his "love affair," and told him he also had received a lock of hair, and produced a lock of raven hair that made Johnson's eyes bulge still further from his head, for it was precisely similar to the one he had received.

"And I've got a lock of hair, too!" cried Charley Fox, from whose head the raven locks had come. He had splendid hair. He produced a sandy lock tied with a blue ribbon.

"Why, that's mine!" gasped Ocky; then he was sorry that he had admitted it, for a conviction of the trick played upon him at once flashed through his mind.

"Yes, and here are your letters," said Wyatt. "Just listen, boys; here's paths for you!"

He began to read the letters, to Ocky's intense mortification, and "set the table in a roar."

Ocky attempted to save himself by saying: "I knew it was you, all the time." But, in the classical language of the present day, that was "too thin."

From Providence I went to a new theater in Boston called the "Lyceum" under the management of Humphrey Bland, for a short time; did some "strolling" in New Bedford, and then secured an engagement for "General Utility" at the Boston Museum, at that time the most popular place of amusement in the city.

This was my first engagement in a first-class theater, and my career as an actor had now fairly commenced.

A Strange Story.

BY EBBE E. REXFORD.

I LOVED my cousin Alice, and how well, God alone knows. I could never make you comprehend what such love as mine was. It is not told in words. But she knew. She knew, and I knew, and that was enough.

Since it is not possible for you to comprehend what my love for her was, you cannot understand the terrible sense of utter desolation that stunned me when they told me that she was dead. Dead! My Alice! It could not be! I cried, and I would not believe it, till they led me to her side and lifted the white cloth from her face, which was like chiseled marble in its cold, still beauty. I knelt down beside her, and kissed her over and over again. I held her hands in mine, and called her the old, loving names, but she did not hear nor heed me. If she heard, she could not answer. And then I knew that she was dead, and I got up and covered the white face from sight, and sat down to think and try to understand it all. I don't know how I came to think of it, but the idea came to me that it was possible for me to win back my love from death itself. It was a wild, wicked thought; but I had often felt that a love like mine was more powerful than anything else in all the world; and here was a chance to prove it, and claim my own again. If I could baffle death! The thought was full of awful fascination. If I could win back to life the woman I loved, I should be a god among men! The thought filled me with a mighty exultation. I would prove how strong my love and the power of my will was, and my darling should be mine forevermore.

In the stillness of the night, I stole her body from the room where they had laid it, and took it to an old and unused chamber, high up under the eaves, where I had studied for hours and days on occult and mysterious things, which other people could not understand; and because I tried to understand them, they said I was mad.

I laid the body on the couch I had made there for myself, and made the door fast, that no one might intrude upon the solemn scene which would witness the summoning back of life into the still, cold form of the woman I loved.

I knelt down by her side, and took both her hands in mine, and fixed my eyes steadily, earnestly on her face. And then I brought the power of my will to bear upon the one thought which the world held for me at that awful moment. I had loved her. She was mine, and mine only, and my will must force life and which had fled from her, to come back from the uttermost parts of the earth, from the bounds of space—from the other world, perhaps—and stir again into action the stagnant blood, and set the clogged wheels in motion. "Life of her I love!" I cried, "wherever

you are, come back! I command you!" and my will seemed to be strong enough to move the lightning. It went leaping through space like the lightning. It was as restless as the tempest. It was the one power in the world, in that awful, intense moment.

"Come back!" I cried. "I command you to come back!" and in that brief time it seemed as if I lived a thousand ages. Suddenly the white lids of her eyes stirred, and then—she lifted, and my darling looked up at me, and I felt the warm breath cross her lips, and—"I have conquered death!" I cried.

I have done the work of a God! and fell prone upon the floor, and for hours after that I knew nothing.

When I came back to consciousness it was daylight. I got up and went to the couch on which I had laid my Alice, and looked down at her with strange, exultant rapture. I had expected that she would greet me with a smile; but the face was no more like the face of the Alice I had loved than the shadow of a thing is like the substance it is a shadow of. True, the features were the same, but that was all. There was no expression of any emotion; nothing but the shape of that which had been lit up with the light of a mind that had made it beautiful.

"Alice!" I cried, and kissed her. But the features never moved. The dull eyes did not light up with a single gleam of recognition.

A terror came upon me. I clutched at the table to keep from falling. In one swift second I realized all.

I had willed to bring back to her the life she had lost. I had done that. But I had brought back life only. The soul I had no power over, and that was where? Here before me lay the shape of the woman I had loved. But the soul—that which was the Alice I had known, was gone away.

Can you imagine the awful horror that made me sink down upon the floor and hide my face in my hands, and moan and shiver like a being who sees the world slipping away from beneath his feet, and is powerless to help himself? No! No! I cannot make you feel in the faintest degree the terrible sense of my sin, which had been so terribly punished.

I lay there for hours. I dared not look at the shape which breathed, but moved not—at the thing which held in it the life I had summoned back, but from which the soul had gone forever. But by and by a horrible sensation came over me, and I got up and stood beside it, and I was powerless to move away. It held me spell-bound by its silent, awful power. More than once I tried to break away from it, and I strove to leave the room; but that strange, terrible fascination drew me back.

At length the intensity of my feelings exhausted me, and I fell to the floor in a long swoon. When I awoke from it I was weak as a child. The first thought that came into my mind was of the shape, and as before I was forced by the same terrible power to drag myself to it and look upon my work. And as I sat there hour after hour powerless to stir, or even turn my eyes away from the horrible thing, I realized that it was like the vampire, which sucks away our life-blood. I had called back the mysterious principle we call life. And this life which I had dared to meddle with, in my sinful recklessness, fed itself and existed upon my own vitality. It was draining the vital force from my veins with terrible swiftness.

In a little while that which it fed upon would be exhausted, and then—

My God! my God! But I am mad when I say that. I have no God. I have set myself up against him, and dared to defy him by my impious deed. I have gone further than any man can go and be forgiven. I have brought a swift and terrible punishment upon myself. What could be more terrible than to sit and watch this thing! This horrible, horrible thing! I had hoped to bring back the soul that was Alice. But that is somewhere far away, and I know that I have forever separated my soul from hers. She is mine no longer. I have lost her eternally, and this shape mocks me with my loss. I am going mad, I think. It could not be that I could shut out the sight of it, but I cannot! If I turn away some mysterious power draws me back, and the soulless eyes stare up at me until I feel as if the world was whirling off into space and there was nothing in it save myself and this hideous thing.

I have written my story down. I dare not die with it unconfessed. It may warn some other rash mortal to beware and not meddle with the doings of God. Oh, Alice! Alice! my lost darling, where are you! I have sinned, and the loss of you is my punishment! In the last two days I have lived ten thousand years. My hair is white. I am an old, old man. I am dying. In a little while this shape which once held your soul will have drained the last drop of life from me, and then—I dare not think of it. I can only think of you and the sin by which I have lost you forever. Oh, Alice! pray for me, pity me!

We read the MSS. through with strange emotions. It was old and yellow with time, and the dust of years had gathered on it. It had been written with a feeble hand, and a great blot marked the place where the pen had fallen from his fingers. Perhaps the blot of death had fallen upon his life then. We can say? We looked at the two moldering skeletons with faces that were full of awe, and I know that both of us were thinking about the strange, weird story we had read. Had the man who had written it done what he claimed he had? or was it but the wild and fanciful story of a madman's brain?

We turned away and left the room silently and thoughtfully, and breathed freer when we shut the door of the old house behind us. It had kept its secret for many years, but we had found it out at last.

All About Alligators.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TROUT-FISHING."

ALLIGATORS were at one time very numerous in all of the streams emptying into the Gulf of Mexico, and in those some degrees to the north of it.

During the early days of the settlement of Louisiana and Florida, the alligator was hunted for its oil, which was used by the manufacturers of indigo to keep their kettles from boiling over; a small ladle full would stop the ebullition of a large pot.

But since the cultivation of indigo has been abandoned, the regular pursuit of this mailed monarch of the fresh water may be said to have ceased; though more or less of them are killed every year for their skins, which are converted into a very durable leather, suscep-

tible of receiving a high polish, but of a very porous nature.

However, as hunters habitually shoot them, and they are of a shy, retiring nature, and easily alarmed by noise, except when suffering from the pangs of hunger, wounded, or alarmed for the safety of their young, they have in a great measure retired from the streams navigated by steamboats, and sought refuge in the Everglades of Florida and the dense and gloomy swamps of Louisiana and lower Mississippi.

In these marshy fastnesses, seldom invaded save by the canoe of the hunter during the winter months, where, during the summer and fall, the deadly miasma produced by stagnant water, decaying vegetation, and a semi-tropical sun, threatens death or lingering disease to the rash intruder, the alligator dwells in security, with none to dispute his reign. Here they may be seen darting after their prey, basking in the hot sun, or floating like lifeless logs on the surface of the water.

In Florida, Central and South America, the alligator is said to attain the length of twenty-five and even thirty feet; but I doubt it, and am inclined to think that those reported to have been seen of such extreme large size were the genuine crocodile, which is found in those parts, and can readily be distinguished from the alligator, by the peculiar indentation of the outer edges of its feet, and other peculiarities, well known to naturalists. I have seen an immense number of alligators, and killed many, but the largest which I have ever seen was one which I shot and killed on a sand-bar on Pearl River, which measured nineteen feet, four inches. Twelve or fourteen feet is regarded as a large size, and the majority of them are not more than eight, nine, or ten feet long.

Alligators which have not been molested much will readily come to the surface of the water and seize any small object which is thrown into it. I have on several occasions thrown inflated bladders on the surface of lakes which were infested by them; an alligator would attempt to seize it, but the air expelled from his mouth, by the closing of his jaws, would blow the bladder out of reach, and it was rarely the case that the tantalizing bait was captured, until there were four, six, or perhaps many more, snapping at it from different sides. An empty bottle, corked, to keep out the water, will be served the same way, but, being heavier, it is more easy to capture, and the sound made by the glass, as it is crushed between the strong jaws, can be heard for some distance.

The alligators feed principally on fish, but they will catch and eat any small animal that they can, when it is feeding on the bank, drinking, or swimming in the waters they inhabit; they have a very marked penchant for hogs and dogs, and there are many hunters who have had valuable hounds or retrievers carried off by them. The bodies of human beings or animals, which have been drowned, or otherwise deprived of life, will, if left on the bank, or in the water, be eaten by alligators, but they rarely ever attack man, at least in North America, whatever they may do in the tropics. I have often, when hunting, waded or swam my horse across bayous and lakes where they abounded, and frequently bathed in streams infested by them, but they have never molested me.

A man to be a successful alligator hunter must be cautious, patient, a good shot, and indifferent about mud and musketoes.

Alligators are killed by shooting them with ball, either in the eye or behind the shoulder; or with a charge of buck-shot fired at short range; in the latter case, the aim should always be just back of the fore-leg, and rather low, as the scales are smallest and thinnest there. A ball from a heavy rifle will, under certain circumstances, penetrate any portion of their bodies, but if the brain or heart is not pierced, the wound is not necessarily fatal, and scarcely ever immediately so; and if the ball strike obliquely on the heavy scales of the sides or back, it is sure to glance off without doing any damage.

It is very important, if the hunter wishes to secure his game, that alligators should be killed outright, or so badly disabled that they can not plunge into the water; for if an alligator, though it be mortally wounded, gets into a running stream or deep lake, it is scarcely ever recovered, as they invariably sink when dead, and only float after decomposition has commenced.

The following account of the killing of an alligator, and securing it after it had sunk in a lake, is from personal experience:

About daylight one morning in the summer of 18—, five young men—Will Jones, Frank Gainer, Will Barron, Wistar W., who rejoiced in the sobriquet of "Chow-Chow," and Aaron L., accompanied by Jupiter, a grizzly, plunging into the water, for if an alligator, though it be mortally wounded, gets into a running stream or deep lake, it is scarcely ever recovered, as they invariably sink when dead, and only float after decomposition has commenced.

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None of the party had ever visited the lake to which they were going, except Jupiter, who was familiar with every foot of ground for miles up and down the river.

"Jup," asked Chow-Chow, "do you think that the fish will bite to-day?"

"Oh, yes, sir; de fish will bite, for sure. You see, dere is de souf-win' an'—"

"De win' from de souf Blows de bate in de fishe's mouf."

"Is dere anything to shoot about de lake?"

"Dere's deer an' turkey in dem woods, and dere wur bear dere free year ago, but since de time dat Mr. Paxum open de plantatun, 'bout a mile from dere, dey hab gonod 'way and left."

"It is not at all likely that we will see a deer or turkey, when there are so many of us fishing around de lake. Is dere anything else?"

"Plenty ob squirrels, and maby de young wood-duck; dey do breed dere."

"Any alligators?"

"Yes, sir, dere's alligators in dat lake."

"Many?"

"I hab never see so many ob dem dere, but one ob dem is de biggest dat I eber sot dese eyes on; I tink he 'mos' long as dis kerno."

"I expect you were scared, Jupiter, and that made you think the alligator was so large."

"Dere nebbur was dat alligator dat could make me 'frid," replied Jupiter, with considerable dignity; "many and many's de time I hab go' wid Mars Aaron, when he shoot de alligator, and he nebbur see me 'frid, did you, Mars Aaron?"

"No," said Aaron; "if there is anything in seeing alligators killed, Jupiter ought not to care a snap for them."

"I was wid Mars Aaron," continued Jupiter, "when he killed twenty-seven alligators in de one mornin'."

"Twenty-seven? Now, Jupiter, you know that you are stretching; how could he kill so many in one day?"

"It was in dis way dat it happen'. Mars Aaron went to old massa's plantation dat is back from Richmun', in Louisiana, and carry me wid him. He hab jus' got dat rifle which he hab wid him dis day, so he go and take dat 'loug. The day after, an' get dere, Mars Aaron say in de mornin', 'Jupiter, get some bait, an me go fish.' When we got to de big lake, bout six miles from de house, it was chock-full, rummin' ober wid alligator; dere was de lilly-bitter alligator, no more dan long as my han', an' dere was de grate big alligator. Dey was in de water, and on de rafts, an' sunnin' demselves on de bank. I tink dat all de alligators in de world was dere. I eber see so many, no neber. Den Mars Aaron say, 'I see if dis rifle be good for shoot; you keep de comt, Jupiter; an' den he shoot, an' he shoot, an' I keep count ob dose dat he kill' dead, and not pay any 'tention to dose dat was hurt, but not kill', until dere was twenty-seven; den he say, 'dese sights be all right, now we fish, an' dat is de place for fish, for we cotched more'n two hundred, in 'bout free hours.'"

"Well, you had better look sharp, Jupiter, or that big alligator will catch you to-day."

"Dat alligator better not be foolin' 'roun' dis day; if Mars Aaron eber see him troo de sights ob dat gun what he hab dere, he will stop from troublin' anybody any more."

Having now reached the point where they intended to leave their boats, the whole party disembarked, pulled the canoes on the bank, shouldered their traps, and, under the guidance of Jupiter, struck into an almost obliterated path through the woods, and after a walk of about a mile, reached the lake.

The lake at its southern extremity, and for about half a mile of its length, was some quarter of a mile wide; it then contracted suddenly to a width of about three hundred yards, extended in a tortuous course for a mile, gradually narrowing, and growing shallow, until it ended at last in a bayou, now nearly dry, but which at certain stages of water connected it with the Yazoo river.

Cypress trees grew in the water, in some instances far out in the lake, and from their limbs and those of the trees that stood in the edge, and on the shores of the lake, hung long festoons of gray moss.

As there was only one boat in the lake, Jones, Gainer, Barron, and Jupiter, were left on the wide swelling butt of a huge cypress, that grew near the middle of the lake, while Aaron L. and Chow-Chow paddled cautiously toward the upper end of the lake, fishing, and looking out for game, but they soon heard those they had left on the cypress, shouting, "Run here! Come here! Help! Alligator," etc.

"There's something wrong," said Aaron, bending to his oars and sending the skiff skimming through the water. "What's the matter?" he asked, as the boat approached the cypress. "Alligator!" they responded in a breath. "Barron hooked a large fish; it splashed about considerably when he was trying to land it, and a big alligator come up and swam directly towards us; he was not more than twenty feet away, when we shouted; the noise scared him and he dived at once."

"Little more'n he hab some ob us, sure," said Jupiter, whose eyes were distended with fear.

"Keep still for a few minutes," said Aaron, stepping onto the cypress with his rifle in his hand; "ten to one he will show himself again. Ha! here he is now," he exclaimed, as his keen eye noticed a small black object, not much larger than a walnut, appear on the surface of the water, about sixty yards away; and which he at once recognized as the knob or swell over the eye of an alligator.

The tiger is sprung; the rifle cocked, slowly raised to the shoulder, and the finely drawn sight brought to bear on the small gleaming eye; for an instant the heavy barrel remains motionless; light as the touch of a lady's gloved hand the fore-finger presses the hair-trigger; there is a sharp, whip-like report; the bullet speeds true to its mark; and the stricken monster, brandishing his powerful tail high in the air, plunges madly down, making the waters foam around him.

"That got him," said Aaron, as he heard the thud of the bullet as it struck, and noticed the action of the alligator. "All aboard!" he continued, reloading his rifle, and stepping into the boat; "he is hard hit, but not dead, and will come up, and when he does I wish to be on hand to finish him."

As the boat approached the place where he had disappeared, the alligator darted upward, throwing nearly half of his body clear of the water, and barely missed falling across the bow of the skiff; but, sudden and unexpected as this movement was, it was not quicker than the action of Aaron; the rifle again pours forth its deadly contents, and the ball pierces the heart of the huge saurian; it struggles convulsively on the surface of the water for a few seconds, turns on its back, and then sinks slowly out of sight.

Some large hooks were then lashed to the ends of the cane poles, which were used for fishing-rods, and after feeling about on the bottom in about fourteen feet of water, for some time, the alligator was hooked, drawn up, towed ashore, and pulled out. He measured sixteen feet two inches in length, and was unusually large.

Chow-Chow pried open the mouth of the alligator to its widest extent with a stick, which he removed with Jupiter was in a half-squinting attitude, examining it intently; the upper jaw closed or fell with a snap, and Jupiter leaped backward, lost his footing, and assumed a sitting attitude in the shallow water at the edge of the lake, from which he emerged, plastered with mud, and dripping with water, exclaiming, ruefully:

"Dar now!"

"Well, Jupiter," said Jones, after the laughter caused by this incident had subsided, "you need not pretend that you were not scared then."

"No, Massa Jones; I was not 'zactly scare', but at dat minnit I was t'inkin dat dis was de same 'identical alligator what stole my fish, and cotched my dog Rober, when I was fishin' in dis lake on de Sunday, more'n two years ago, and when him mouf shet, I frot he make snap to bite me, and it was so sudden like, it give me de sprize, and upst me at de same time."